

# Special Articles

# Jewish Organizational Life in the United States Since 1945

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AFTER MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY of expansive institutional growth at home and self-confident advocacy on behalf of coreligionists abroad, the organized Jewish community of the United States has entered a period of introspection and retrenchment in the 1990s. Voices emanating from all sectors of the organized community demand a reallocation of funds and energy from foreign to local Jewish needs, as well as a rethinking of priorities within the domestic agenda. Their message is unambiguous — “The future begins at home.”<sup>1</sup> Institutional planners are also advocating a “radical redesign” of the community’s structure: some insist that agencies founded early in the 20th century are obsolete and should merge or disappear; others seek to create entirely new institutions; others castigate communal leaders as “undemocratic” or irrelevant to the lives of most Jews and demand that they step aside; and still others urge a “major overhaul” of the community’s priorities as a way to win back the alienated and disaffiliated.<sup>2</sup> In short, the organized Jewish community is engaged in a far-reaching reassessment of its mission and governing institutions.

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*Note:* The author acknowledges with appreciation generous support from the Abbell Faculty Research Fund at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Much of the research for this essay was conducted at the Blaustein Library of the American Jewish Committee, whose staff graciously provided much helpful assistance. The author also thanks Jerome Chanes and Peter Medding for reviewing the manuscript.

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Larry Yudelson, “The Future Begins at Home,” *Long Island Jewish World*, Mar. 18 – 24, 1994, pp. 16 – 17.

<sup>2</sup>For a sampling of the steady cascade of such studies and prescriptions, see, for example, Gary A. Tobin, *Creating New Jewish Organizations and Institutions* (Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, Sept. 1994); Samuel Norich, *What Will Bind Us Now? A Report on the Institutional Ties Between Israel and American Jewry* (Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation, 1994); Daniel Schifrin, “Radical Redesign: Without a Major Overhaul, the Organized Jewish Community May be Headed for Extinction,” *Jewish Week* (New York), Nov. 11 – 14, 1994, pp. 26 – 28; Daniel J. Elazar, “The New Geo-Demographics of American Jewry,” *Jerusalem Letter* no. 278, July 1993, which opens with the pronouncement that “American Jewry is on the verge of an organizational upheaval of an extent it has not seen for nearly a hundred years. . . .” (p. 1); and the discussion of Jerome Chanes on democracy in the Jewish community in “E Pluribus . . .,” *Sh’ma*, Dec. 23, 1994, p. 6.

The present essay seeks to contribute to this communal stock-taking by analyzing the most pronounced trends in American Jewish organizational life in the postwar era. How has the organized community defined its interests and expressed its goals at different points in the past half century? And to what extent have Jewish organizations built a consensus on fundamental questions of priorities and policies? These broader themes provide a context in which to examine the work of specific organizations and a means to map the shifting topography of the organized community: Which organizations have prospered and which have declined? To what extent have these agencies achieved a measure of coordination and eliminated duplication? Who leads the organized Jewish community and who contributes the funds and time that make it possible for it to function? Has the evolving role of women in American society altered their participation in the organized Jewish community? And are there noticeable shifts in both the composition and treatment of dissenting groups? In order to place these and other questions in a historical context, we begin with an analysis of the long-term challenges facing the organized Jewish community. We then turn to particular trends evident during the immediate postwar era, a time regarded by some as a "golden age" of American leadership in the international arena and of voluntarism at home.

### THE "GOLDEN AGE" OF JEWISH COMMUNAL LIFE (1945-67)<sup>3</sup>

#### *The Challenge*

From the first settlement of Jews on these shores three hundred years ago to the late 20th century, the most critical factor shaping organized Jewish life in the United States has been the American ethic of voluntarism. Whereas Jews in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East were compelled by the state to establish and maintain an official community (*kehillah*), which represented them before the government and regulated most Jewish group activities, America offered a model of communal life that was entirely voluntary rather than state mandated.<sup>4</sup> Since Colonial times, the "aloofness of the state"<sup>5</sup> regarding internal Jewish arrangements has at

<sup>3</sup>The section heading is borrowed from Murray Friedman, *The Utopian Dilemma: American Judaism and Public Policy* (Ethics and Policy Center, Washington, D.C., 1985), chap. 2, and Arthur A. Goren, "A 'Golden Decade' for American Jews: 1945 - 1955," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 8, 1992, pp. 3 - 20.

<sup>4</sup>For a broad historical overview of Jewish communal life, see Salo W. Baron, *The Jewish Community: Its History and Structure to the American Revolution*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1942).

<sup>5</sup>Hasia Diner, "Jewish Self-Governance, American Style," *American Jewish History* 81, no. 3 - 4, Spring-Summer 1994, p. 287.

times served as a boon to activism and at other times has sabotaged efforts to achieve unity; but throughout, it has profoundly shaped Jewish collective endeavors in the United States.

The preeminence of voluntary association in American civic life has been a mixed blessing for Jews. It has encouraged Jews to establish their own agencies, thereby facilitating the process of group maintenance. Virtually from their arrival in North America in 1654, Jews have exercised their right to free association by establishing a plethora of organizations to meet their separate needs as a religious, cultural, and ethnic group. The only check on institutional growth has been a practical consideration: Jews can have only as many organizations as they are prepared to support. It is in this regard that the American system also poses a challenge to organized Jewish life, for just as the spirit of voluntarism encourages free association, it also respects the rights of each individual to abstain from group activity — not to volunteer. With their long history of reliance on compulsion as the essential basis of group endeavor, Jews have struggled mightily to reach the unaffiliated through persuasion, social pressure, and ideological and religious exhortation. In every period of American Jewish history, a significant minority of Jews has been unmoved by these appeals and has remained on the periphery.

The major challenge posed by the American system for those who do choose to participate is that it encourages the spawning of ever new agencies and subverts efforts at coordination and centralization. Initially, Jews resisted these centrifugal pressures. During the Colonial and Early National periods of American Jewish history, a small number of synagogues monopolized the delivery of most Jewish goods and services — ranging from the distribution of alms to the baking of matzah, from controlling who received synagogue honors to who would be buried in the Jewish cemetery. But once immigration began to accelerate in the early decades of the 19th century, disgruntled natives or immigrants created competing congregations, and the monopoly of individual synagogues was destroyed. Since then, successive waves of Jewish immigrants from Sephardic and Ashkenazic lands, from Central and then Eastern Europe, and more recently from Israel, Muslim lands, and the former Soviet Union, have established their own networks of religious, welfare, and social institutions; native Jews, in turn, have founded agencies to “Americanize” the newcomers or to segregate themselves from alien coreligionists. And both sets of institutions have vied for the privilege of speaking on behalf of American Jewry.

Surveying American Jewish efforts at self-governance, the historian Hasia Diner has astutely identified the ongoing dilemmas:

Jewish America’s pluralism, voluntarism, and fluidity produced a chaotic fragmentation in which rivalry, conflict, and dissension made unified communal

action nearly impossible. If American Jews cherished their freedom to form all kinds of organizations, they bemoaned the fact that anyone could claim to speak for the Jews. If American Jews reveled in their ability to structure their communal life, they lamented the lack of authentic leadership. If American Jews championed the internal democracy of their community, they cringed at the inefficiency and contentiousness that seemed to attend it.<sup>6</sup>

The history of American Jewry is replete with attempts to bring organizational unity out of the chaos, with struggles for power between contending organizations, and with some remarkable, even heroic, examples of concerted action to support and protect Jews at home and abroad.

### *“A Culture of Organizations”*

These patterns were especially evident during the decades immediately after World War II, a time of dynamic institutional growth, in the United States in general and particularly for its Jews. With the victorious prosecution of the war concluded, powerful regenerative forces were unleashed within American society. A vast cohort of young people who delayed marriage during the Great Depression and ensuing war years now married and gave birth to a “baby boom” generation, sought affordable housing in the suburbs, and both benefited from and sparked an economic boom of unprecedented scope. In time this massive economic growth provided the leisure and the financial means for active engagement in voluntary activities.

Jews fully participated in the postwar economic boom — and outpaced most other groups in a number of critical areas. Their level of educational attainment rose dramatically, and increasingly larger numbers of Jews entered middle- and upper-middle-class occupations. By the 1960s, managers and proprietors were the largest occupational category among Jews. A rising percentage of Jews were also entering the ranks of professionals, so that, according to one contemporary estimate, “twice as many Jews were professionals as in the population at large.”<sup>7</sup> Most Jews benefited from declining levels of job discrimination, a trend particularly evident among the pioneers who penetrated the highest echelons of corporate America for the first time. Marveling at this rapid postwar mobility, Marshall Sklare, the leading sociologist of postwar American Jewry, concluded that, “despite the recency of their arrival in the United States, on such crucial indicators as secular education and occupation Jews rival the oldest and most successful segments of that privileged group which is sometimes invidiously referred to as the ‘WASPs.’”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Marshall Sklare, *America's Jews* (New York, 1971), pp. 51 – 67.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 68 – 69.

This upward mobility provided Jews with the economic means to fund the massive programs of the postwar decades.<sup>9</sup> In the 28-year period from 1939 to 1966, over \$3 billion was raised by federated campaigns organized by local Jewish communities to fund local, national, and overseas programs and services.<sup>10</sup> This staggering figure excludes capital-fund and endowment campaigns conducted by Jewish federations for hospitals, homes for the aged, and other facilities. Nor does it include money raised by educational and religious institutions, such as synagogues, which conducted their own fund drives. Collectively, these campaigns easily raised a comparable amount.

Moreover, the amount of Jewish giving progressively bounded upward: by the end of World War II, federated campaigns alone raised \$57 million, a figure that more than doubled in 1946; by the time of Israel's establishment in 1948, over \$200 million was raised, a peak year that would not be surpassed until 1967. Nonetheless, over \$100 million was raised annually by federated campaigns, with sums increasing to \$136 million in 1966.<sup>11</sup> The stunning economic advances made by Jews in the postwar decades were a necessary precondition for such massive giving.

A number of additional factors, some unique to the American Jewish community, prompted such an outpouring of philanthropy and voluntarism. As the United States increasingly dominated the international arena during the war years, American Jewry, by virtue of its proximity to power, was catapulted to leadership of world Jewry. Furthermore, the destruction of European Jewry and the dire condition of the surviving remnants created a leadership vacuum that only American Jewry could fill, since it was the largest remaining community, and certainly the most intact and secure. In the immediate postwar era, American Jews were confronted with the intertwined challenges of resettling displaced persons scattered throughout Europe and helping to create a Jewish state out of the wreckage of the Holocaust. These international Jewish crises necessitated massive funding to relieve the suffering of Jews overseas — and an elaborate institutional

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<sup>9</sup>It is difficult to imagine that the Jewish philanthropic enterprise could have succeeded to the extent it did without the hospitable environment created by the American tax structure. Federal tax laws exempt virtually any type of nonprofit organization from paying taxes and consider contributions to organizations operated for "religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes" tax-deductible in computing federal income taxes. For a brief discussion of the impact of tax laws and some of the specific Internal Revenue codes, see Will Maslow, *The Structure and Functioning of the American Jewish Community* (American Jewish Congress and American Section of the World Jewish Congress, New York, 1974), pp. 14–15.

<sup>10</sup>S.P. Goldberg, "Jewish Communal Service," *American Jewish Year Book* (hereafter AJYB) 1967, vol. 68, pp. 126–28.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

infrastructure to raise and distribute relief funds.<sup>12</sup>

Internally, a different set of needs attracted Jews to organizational participation. As the children and grandchildren of East European immigrants came of age, they yearned for respectability and acceptance within American society. They quickly learned that affiliation with a house of worship was the proper American way. No less an authority than President Dwight D. Eisenhower had sanctioned the role of religion when he declared in 1954: "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply felt religious faith — and I don't care what it is."<sup>13</sup> Jews participated in the postwar religious revival by investing heavily in new synagogue buildings and other religious institutions. Ironically, the more Jews contributed to these parochial activities, the more they participated in an enterprise sanctioned by the wider society. Hence, membership in the synagogues that now dotted new suburban developments offered both a badge of respectability and entree into the larger society, both of which were prized by upwardly mobile second- and third-generation Americans, the majority of the Jewish community.

If the synagogue emerged as the preeminent institution of Jewish suburbia, it was not because Jews experienced a surge of religious feeling; actual attendance at religious services remained pitifully low. In effect, midcentury Jews had to camouflage their ethnic activities in a religious guise to win acceptance. American notions of pluralism in this period sanctioned a tripartite expression of religion — giving parity to Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism — but discouraged ethnic allegiances.<sup>14</sup> As noted in 1951 by C. Bezalel Sherman, "Jews . . . have no other alternative but to constitute themselves as a community operating in a religious framework. . . . The irreligious Jew . . . will have to accept a religious designation for the group of which he wishes to be a member without sharing the tenets of its faith. This is the price a secularist Jew will have to pay for his voluntary sharing in a minority status."<sup>15</sup> Many suburban synagogues catered to this type of clientele by sponsoring a wide range of social and recreational programs

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<sup>12</sup>On the prewar efforts, see Yehuda Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1929 – 1939* (Philadelphia, 1974). On overseas relief efforts during the war years and after, see Harry L. Lurie, *A Heritage Affirmed: The Jewish Federation Movement in America* (Philadelphia, 1961), chaps. 6, 8; Marc Lee Raphael, *A History of the United Jewish Appeal* (Chico, Calif., 1982), chaps. 2 – 5; and Ernest Stock, *Partners and Pursestrings: History of the United States Israel Appeal* (Lanham, Md., 1987), parts 5 – 7.

<sup>13</sup>Quoted in Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, vol. 2 (Garden City, N.Y., 1975), p. 450.

<sup>14</sup>Arthur A. Goren, "A 'Golden Decade' for American Jews: 1945 – 1955," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 8, 1992, pp. 4 – 8. The most influential contemporary analysis was offered by Will Herberg in *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, N.Y., 1955).

<sup>15</sup>Quoted by Goren, p. 10.

that were essentially devoid of religious content but enabled individuals to engage in ethnic group activities.

Jews who wished to participate in communal service invested most of their energies and time in organizational work. Membership in service organizations soared. Within synagogues, sisterhood and brotherhood groups thrived in all of the denominations, since they provided an opportunity to raise funds for the congregation and simultaneously offered a congenial social environment. National service organizations also expanded their membership base. Among the most successful was Hadassah, which grew to become the largest general women's organization in the United States, reaching a peak of 385,000 members in the early 1980s.<sup>16</sup> B'nai B'rith grew dramatically in this period as well, reaching a membership of some 200,000 by the late 1960s.<sup>17</sup> Both organizations combined service in behalf of Jewish needs — the former supported medical facilities in Israel, the latter offered programs for Jewish youth, housing for the elderly, and aid for Jews abroad — with a setting for informal group activity. Some other successful service organizations of this period were the National Council of Jewish Women,<sup>18</sup> a nondenominational membership group that supports social services, and ORT, the Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training, which sponsors vocational training programs in the United States and overseas. The service organization met a fourfold need: first, it offered a social setting for a Jewish population feeling increasingly isolated in suburban America; second, it was a vehicle for activism for a generation that was no longer engaged in the socialist struggle of immigrant workers yet still cared about social causes; third, it provided newly affluent Jews with activities to fill their expanding leisure time; and fourth, it offered an institutional form, though not a content, for expressing Jewishness.<sup>19</sup>

The most detailed communal survey of the time offered ample evidence to substantiate a sharp increase in organizational participation. In their famous Lakeville study of the 1950s,<sup>20</sup> which was sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum found that

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<sup>16</sup>Yaffa Schlessinger, "Hadassah: The National Women's Zionist Organization of America," *Contemporary Jewry* 15, 1994, p. 121.

<sup>17</sup>David Makovsky, "B'nai B'rith on the Brink: Searching for a Focus," *Moment*, Jan./Feb. 1989, p. 29. On the history of the organization, see Deborah Dash Moore, *B'nai B'rith and the Challenge of Ethnic Leadership* (Albany, N.Y., 1981).

<sup>18</sup>On the history of the National Council, see Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893 - 1993* (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 1993), especially chap. 6, pp. 166 - 203, on this period.

<sup>19</sup>Harold Weisberg, "Ideologies of American Jews," in *The American Jew: A Reappraisal*, ed. Oscar Janowsky (Philadelphia, 1963), pp. 347 - 50.

<sup>20</sup>Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier: A Study of Group Survival in the Open Society*, 2nd rev. ed. (Chicago, 1979). Although first published in 1967, this volume was based on data actually gathered in 1957 - 58 in Highland Park, Ill., a suburb of Chicago.

in one representative suburban community, 88 percent of Jewish adults were affiliated with either a synagogue or another Jewish institution; and among those Jews in their peak years of joining — when their children were of school age — the figure rose to 93 percent. The voluntary agencies that most attracted “Lakeville” Jews were health and welfare organizations, which enrolled 42 percent of all Jewish adults, and synagogue affiliates, such as men’s clubs and sisterhoods (one-third of Jews). The most popular affiliation for men was B’nai B’rith, which attracted 37 percent; among women, ORT and Hadassah were most popular, while a smaller group joined the National Council of Jewish Women (40, 26, and 18 percent of Jewish women in “Lakeville,” respectively, joined these organizations).<sup>21</sup>

Most surprisingly, perhaps, the study found that Jewish rates of affiliation with nonreligious organizations far exceeded those of their Christian neighbors (only 5 percent of the latter had joined sectarian groups not affiliated with a church).<sup>22</sup> This led the authors to conclude that “Jewish organizational involvement seems to provide a secular alternative for that segment of the population which lacks contact with religious values or institutions, but wishes to preserve a link to the Jewish community.”<sup>23</sup>

It was this realization in particular that prompted critics to bemoan the hollow character of a Jewishness based on organizational involvement, even as the community experienced a dramatic expansion. As cogently analyzed by Harold Weisberg, an official of B’nai B’rith who later became a professor of Jewish communal service, American Jews created in the postwar period a “culture of organizations,” which was designed as a substitute for “the great religious discipline which in the past permeated every aspect of individual and communal life. . . . At present,” Weisberg wrote, “Jewish culture in the United States is predominantly what Jews do under the auspices of Jewish organizations.” The rich traditions of Jewish culture and religion were giving way to institutional service. “Jewish communal organizations,” Weisberg noted, “became a necessity and their development and maintenance became the uniquely American Jewish ‘way of life.’ ”<sup>24</sup>

### *The Midcentury “Functional Consensus”*

Although the organizational ideology of “acts and tasks, of belonging and conforming”<sup>25</sup> may have had little to do with substantive Jewish religion or culture, Jewish communal life achieved an unprecedented degree of stability

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 252 – 60.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>24</sup>Weisberg, “Ideologies,” p. 348ff.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 358.

and sharpness of focus — particularly as compared to the first decades of the century. Let us recall that the prewar era of American Jewish history had been marked by intense conflict over communal priorities and strategies. American Jewry was divided between Uptown natives and Downtown “greenhorns,” who clashed over a range of issues: Who should speak for American Jews? Should Jewish leaders defend the interests of their people by conducting dignified, behind-the-scenes negotiations, or should they mobilize the masses to take to the streets? And most bitterly contested of all, should American Jewry support the struggle for a Jewish homeland or fear Zionism as a threat to Jewish security in the United States? Underlying these conflicts were profound class and cultural differences separating native and immigrant Jews, which led to severe clashes between political radicals and those inclined to a more conservative political posture as well as to deep divisions over the nature of Jewish identity in America. Under such circumstances, it was virtually impossible to forge a consensus on communal priorities — even during the crisis years of the Holocaust.<sup>26</sup> In the postwar era, by contrast, second-generation East European Jews rapidly achieved economic mobility, the influence of German Jewish leaders waned, and the Uptown/Downtown interethnic divisions gradually disappeared.

This new social cohesion facilitated the construction of a “functional consensus” regarding American Jewry’s communal agenda. In his insightful analysis of the postwar era, historian Arthur Goren identifies the dual components of the new agenda as “assuring Israel’s security and striving for a liberal America.” Both were linked to America’s self-chosen role as the international guardian of democratic ideals and fair play: the American Jewish community insisted that the United States owed Israel strong support because the Jewish state was an embattled bastion of democracy surrounded by autocratic states. On the domestic front, the defense of Jews was now understood as part of a larger campaign of social action, rather than solely as a parochial cause, to insure that no group in America suffered unfair treatment.<sup>27</sup> Jewish needs both at home and abroad were therefore explained in universal terms: Israel deserved support because it embodied

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<sup>26</sup>On these developments, see Gerald Sorin, *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880–1920*, especially chaps. 2 and 5, and Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920–1945*, especially chap. 6, vols. 3 and 4, respectively, of *The Jewish People in America* (Baltimore, 1992).

<sup>27</sup>This analysis is based on Goren’s “A ‘Golden Decade,’” pp. 3–20. There is ample evidence that the consensus within the organized community accurately reflected the views of most Jews. When the “Lakeville” study of the late 1950s questioned Jews about their “image of the good Jew,” 63 percent of the sample thought it essential or desirable to “be a liberal on political and economic issues,” and 83 percent stated the same about the importance of working “for equality for Negroes”; 68 percent deemed it essential or desirable for the good Jew to support Israel. Sklare and Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier*, p. 322.

what was best in America, rather than because it was a separate country with special needs; anti-Semitism was fought not as an attack upon Jews but as a symptom of other prejudices that were a blight on America. Couched in these terms, the defense of Jewish interests facilitated *integration* in America, rather than highlighting Jewish particularism.

These twin concepts energized Jewish organizations and committed them to a new activism regarding both foreign and domestic policy. Each of the major religious denominations of American Judaism, for example, formed social action commissions in the first postwar years. Most notably, as early as 1949, the Reform movement laid the foundation for what would eventually become its Social Action Center in Washington, D.C. (later renamed the Religious Action Center). Throughout the 1950s, rabbinic organizations issued resolutions supporting union workers — despite the fact that most Jews were no longer in working-class occupations. Organizations of the Reform movement routinely called for government-funded housing and medical care for the poor; Conservative rabbis rejoiced when the Supreme Court handed down its school desegregation decision in 1954; and the Rabbinical Council of America, the largest organization of Orthodox rabbis, approved resolutions at its 1951 convention supporting price and rent controls. All of these were expressions of the new social activism emerging from the conviction that Jewish interests were best served in a just society.<sup>28</sup>

The defense agencies of American Jewry also reoriented themselves. Where formerly they had concentrated on fighting anti-Semitism, they broadened their agenda to encompass all forms of social action. They supported legislation to end racial discrimination and to strengthen unions; they urged the government in Washington to embrace an internationalist policy, which included foreign aid to democratic nations (such as Israel); and they favored social-welfare programs. In 1945, the American Jewish Congress created a Commission on Law and Social Action dedicated to the twin tasks of “focus[ing] attention through study and research on [social] abuses which must be ended, and promot[ing] . . . public policies which will make discrimination illegal and assure democratic rights for all racial and religious minorities.”<sup>29</sup>

A year later, the American Jewish Committee’s executive committee resolved to broaden that agency’s mandate beyond the battle against anti-Semitism on the grounds that

there is the closest relation between the protection of the civil rights of all citizens and the protection of the civil rights of the members of particular

<sup>28</sup>The new mood is well captured in Friedman, *Utopian Dilemma*, pp. 18 – 35.

<sup>29</sup>Memorandum to Jewish Community Leaders and Workers, from the Commission on Law and Social Action of the American Jewish Congress, n.d., p. 1 (in the Blaustein Library of the American Jewish Committee).

groups; . . . it is a proper exercise of the power of our Charter that the American Jewish Committee join with other groups in the protection of the civil rights of the members of all groups irrespective of race, religion, color or national origin. . . .<sup>30</sup>

By 1953, the National Community Relations Advisory Council (NCRAC, later renamed NJCRAC when the word “Jewish” was added in 1971), the coordinator of most Jewish community relations agencies in the country, set forth a similar rationale for its involvement in social-policy matters:

The overall objectives of Jewish community relations are to protect and promote equal rights and opportunities and to create conditions that contribute to the vitality of Jewish living. . . . These opportunities can be realized in a society in which all persons are secure, whatever their religion, race or origin. . . .<sup>31</sup>

Based on this latter premise, NCRAC would develop liberal policy positions on a wide range of social questions that had little direct bearing on relations between Jews and their neighbors.

A strong communal identification with Israel was a bit slower in coming. In 1953, five years after Israel’s establishment, the *Joint Program Plan* of NCRAC mentioned Israel only once — and that was in the context of its criticism of the Soviet Union and its “anti-Israel activities.” A year later, NCRAC leaders were a bit more expansive about Israel, but they referred to the relationship between American and Israeli Jews in vague terms, conceding only “a deep and strong sense of cultural and ethnic affinity with the people of Israel and a warm sympathy for the young state.” The turning point came in the mid-1950s, especially during the Sinai campaign of 1956. Initially, Jewish groups felt constrained to voice criticism of the U.S. government’s threat to impose unilateral sanctions on Israel. But particularly after the White House tried to drive a wedge between Zionists and non-Zionists on the question of Sinai, Jewish attitudes changed. The 1957 – 58 *Joint Program Plan* reflected this shift. Instead of referring to “affinities” with Israel, it noted that “the American public accepted the American Jewish concern about Israel . . . as a natural, normal manifestation of interest based on sympathies and emotional attachments of a sort that are common to many Americans.” It went on to note that “the maintenance of dynamic relationships between American Jewry and the people of Israel . . . is regarded by the overwhelming majority of American Jews as conducive towards creative Jewish living here.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Naomi W. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: A History of the American Jewish Committee, 1906 – 1966* (Philadelphia, 1972), pp. 383 – 85.

<sup>31</sup>Quoted by Peter Y. Medding in “Segmented Ethnicity and the New Jewish Politics,” *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 3 (New York, 1987), pp. 32 – 33.

<sup>32</sup>This discussion is based on Medding’s important essay, “Segmented Ethnicity and the New Jewish Politics,” pp. 32 – 33. According to Albert Chernin, a longtime executive of NJCRAC, community relations organizations shifted in their attitudes toward Israel already in 1955 in response to a stepped-up Soviet arms buildup of Arab nations. See his essay, “Jewish Commu-

Other organizations linked themselves far more directly with Israel in the mid-1950s. Under the presidency of Philip Klutznick, for example, B'nai B'rith rocketed to communal prominence by embracing the cause of Israel as a central component of its agenda. When, in 1954, Assistant Secretary of State Henry Byroade tried to intimidate Israel,<sup>33</sup> Klutznick invited the leaders of 16 national Jewish organizations to meet in New York City and constitute themselves as the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. In 1955, now with 20 members, the Presidents Conference (as it came to be known) convened a meeting in Washington to discuss the Middle East. It was, writes historian Deborah Dash Moore, "the first public conference of its kind, to which State Department representatives were invited; it enabled the American government to hear the opinions of the largest representative body of American Jews assembled since World War II."<sup>34</sup> Thus, by the mid-1950s, American Jewish groups felt sufficiently secure to espouse a strong pro-Israel position and to represent that position before government officials. Moreover, Jewish organizations quickly discovered that support for Israel's welfare aided them domestically, attracting new members and raising their prestige in the Jewish community — and possibly in the wider American society as well.

The extent to which the functional consensus of support for Israel, coupled with a liberal domestic agenda, animated Jewish organizational life in the postwar decades can be gauged by examining the altered contours of the communal map and the amounts of money allocated to specific activities. But first it is necessary to impose an organizing framework on the seeming anarchy of Jewish communal life.

### *Shifting Communal Priorities*

The work of the Jewish community in the postwar period has been conducted by an extensive and tangled network of agencies. In his influential study *Community and Polity: The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry*, political scientist Daniel Elazar sought to untangle this jumble of agencies, institutions, and programs by placing them on a grid that encompasses both an organization's spheres of activities and the geographic scope of its interests. Jewish organizations, Elazar has noted, operate in five spheres: (1) religious institutions and congregations; (2) educational and cultural enterprises for Jews of all ages; (3) community relations agencies

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nity Relations — Boundaries and Priorities," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 54, Summer 1978, reprinted in *The Turbulent Decades*, ed. Graenum Berger (Conference of Jewish Communal Service, New York, 1980), vol. 1, p. 601.

<sup>33</sup>For more on this incident, see our discussion below on the American Council for Judaism.

<sup>34</sup>Moore, *B'nai B'rith*, pp. 218 – 22.

that work to bridge the lives of Jews and their neighbors; (4) communal and welfare agencies, whose interests range from physical and mental health services to recreational programs to the communal press; and (5) Israel and other overseas agencies that channel money to deserving institutions abroad and offer relief and support for needy foreign coreligionists. American Jewry has produced an array of organizations to work in each of these spheres, some concentrating on local needs, while others operate mainly on the national or international level.<sup>35</sup>

In order to carry out its postwar communal agenda, the organized Jewish community reallocated its resources among the different types of activities. The most far-reaching changes affected the ration of funds allocated for domestic as opposed to overseas needs. In truth, the foundation for this redistribution was already set during the war years, when a new structure was established to coordinate fund-raising for overseas and local needs. Until the late 1930s, the two causes had coexisted uneasily. The primary agencies for aiding Jews abroad — the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the United Palestine Appeal (UPA) — operated on the national level. Fund-raising for local Jewish needs was conducted in each community by a federation of Jewish philanthropy, which had originally been established as a joint fund-raising body to eliminate competition for funds between local agencies. (The movement toward federated Jewish campaigns on the local level began in the last years of the 19th century and gained greatest momentum between the two world wars — especially during the 1930s.)<sup>36</sup>

In a critical first step, in 1939, the coordinating body of local federations, the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, worked with (and pressured) the non-Zionist JDC and the Zionist UPA to create a merged campaign called the United Jewish Appeal (UJA). Under this agreement, the UJA became “the single American Jewish fund-raising organization for the work of relief and rehabilitation in Europe, for immigration and settlement in Palestine, and for refugee aid in the United States.”<sup>37</sup> Fund-raising for the UJA was to be conducted primarily by federated campaigns in some 225 local communities. In the postwar era, community after community

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<sup>35</sup>Daniel J. Elazar, *Community and Polity: The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry* (Philadelphia, 1976), pp. 180 – 227. A thoroughly revised and updated version of this book is to appear shortly.

<sup>36</sup>The theory and practice of Jewish federations will be discussed below. For a helpful chronology of when local Jewish federations were established, see table 17 in Elazar, *Community and Polity*, pp. 163 – 65.

<sup>37</sup>Raphael, *History of the United Jewish Appeal*, p. 1. On the creation of the UJA and the bitter rivalry between Zionists and non-Zionists over an equitable division of funds raised, which nearly torpedoed the new organization, see Raphael, chap. 1, and Harry L. Lurie, *A Heritage Affirmed: The Jewish Federation Movement in America* (Philadelphia, 1961), pp. 136 – 43.

merged their UJA and federation campaigns, a process completed in 1986 when the last major holdout, the Jewish community of New York, fully unified its federation and UJA fund-raising.<sup>38</sup>

The new structure made it possible for American Jewry to assume its role as the primary benefactor of world Jewry during the crisis years after World War II. Put simply, American Jewry shifted its balance of financial allocations from domestic to overseas agencies, a powerful indicator of its reoriented agenda. Thus, whereas in the mid-1930s, merely 7 percent of funds raised by federated Jewish campaigns was allocated for international needs,<sup>39</sup> by the end of World War II, funds were almost evenly divided between domestic and overseas spending, with approximately one-quarter of allocations going directly to Jews in Palestine.<sup>40</sup> Immediately following the war, overseas needs continued to preoccupy American Jewry, especially the plight of refugees and the nascent State of Israel. In the banner year 1948, when over \$200 million was raised by the federated campaigns (as compared with merely \$57 million just three years earlier), a record 81 percent of allocations went to international efforts. Both the absolute and relative sums allocated for overseas needs declined in the 1950s, but throughout the decade, overseas needs continued to receive more than 55 percent of money raised. Israel garnered the overwhelming share of these funds, particularly as allocations for displaced persons in Europe declined and funding for the resettlement of Jews in Israel soared.<sup>41</sup>

In the middle 1950s, fund-raising for Israel leaped again. One impetus was the Suez crisis, which spurred emergency drives — the Special Survival Fund in 1956 and the UJA Emergency Rescue Fund in 1957. Between these campaigns and the Israel Bond drives, the UJA received almost two-thirds of all funds raised by federated campaigns.<sup>42</sup> Crisis campaigns had become a staple of UJA operations even before the Suez crisis. Under the leadership of Herbert Friedman, the UJA routinely identified a dramatic situation and raised money to cope with the “special rescue, or survival, or special Emergency, or Emergency Rescue Fund” of the year. “The basic principle,” according to Friedman, “was that it was to be all for the UJA and not to be shared with the community.” Thus, donors made regular contributions

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<sup>38</sup>On the New York merger, see Ernest Michel, *Promises to Keep* (New York, 1993), p. 224. Although campaign efforts were coordinated in 1973 as a response to the Yom Kippur War, it took until July 1, 1986, more than another decade, to consummate the merger fully.

<sup>39</sup>Maurice J. Karpf, *Jewish Community Organizations in the United States* (New York, 1938), p. 68.

<sup>40</sup>H.L. Lurie, “Jewish Social Welfare,” *AJYB* 1945–46, vol. 47, p. 262.

<sup>41</sup>Arnold Gurin, “Financing of Jewish Communal Programs,” *AJYB* 1954, vol. 55, pp. 127–29; S.P. Goldberg, “Jewish Communal Services: Programs and Finances,” *AJYB* 1958, vol. 59, p. 141, and *AJYB* 1972, vol. 73, p. 239.

<sup>42</sup>Goldberg, “Jewish Communal Services,” *AJYB* 1958, pp. 141–44.

to the federation campaign, of which between 55 and 65 percent went to Israel; in addition to that allocation, all funds raised for the special campaign also were designated for Israel. This "two-line" strategy further tilted the ratio of money from domestic to Israeli needs.<sup>43</sup>

Under the leadership of Friedman, its executive vice-president from 1956 to 1969, the UJA developed a persuasive rationale for absorbing so large a percentage of federated campaign funds. As summarized by historian Marc Lee Raphael, it ran as follows: "The majority of funds in a local community belong overseas, not only because the UJA speakers, promotion, programs, and techniques made large local campaigns possible, but because the specific overseas crises of a given year moved gives the most and loomed as far more critical than a hospital or community center." Those favoring more funds for domestic needs argued, according to Raphael, that "local needs might indeed be felt to be more pressing than the drama of the world-wide exodus to the Promised Land, and that local agencies and concerns were subordinated to overseas crises in campaigns only because tons of canned UJA literature simply ignored or even denigrated non-overseas activities."<sup>44</sup>

In addition to sums raised through federated campaigns, money was channeled to overseas relief through a panoply of organizations — but in this regard too, important shifts occurred in the postwar decades. During the first decades of the century, American Jewry had spawned many groups designed to aid particular populations of needy coreligionists. These began to disappear in the postwar years and were replaced by pro-Israel organizations. Among the groups that disappeared after World War II were the American Committee for Relief and Resettlement of Yemenite Jews, the American Society for Jewish Farm Settlements in Russia, and the Dominican Republic Settlement Association. In their place arose support or "friends of" associations which channeled funds to specific Israeli institutions above and beyond the aid sent via the UJA, e.g., the American Committee for Boys Town Jerusalem and the American Committee for Shaare Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem, both established in 1949.<sup>45</sup>

Priorities for domestic spending shifted in this era as well. Most noteworthy was the declining share allocated to hospitals and other health facilities in the 1950s.<sup>46</sup> In part, these cutbacks were instituted because health costs had become so prohibitively expensive that government fund-

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<sup>43</sup>Raphael, *History of the United Jewish Appeal*, p. 71.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>45</sup>This and subsequent discussions of the changing organizational map of American Jewry are based on an analysis of the "National Jewish Organizations" directory, which appears as a regular feature of the *American Jewish Year Book*.

<sup>46</sup>Graenum Berger, "Historical Overview," in *The Turbulent Decades*, vol. 1, p. 44.

ing, rather than voluntary giving, had to pick up a rising share of the bill. Jewish-sponsored hospitals either were turned over to municipalities or required government funding to survive. A survey of Jewish voluntary institutions conducted in the late 1950s found that of 59 reporting medical and paramedical institutions under Jewish auspices — hospitals, convalescent homes, rehabilitation centers — (out of approximately 90 nationwide), 48 received some public assistance, ranging from 3 to 50 percent of their budgets.

Once Jewish-sponsored hospitals accepted government subsidies, serious questions arose as to whether they could continue to offer programs geared to the special needs of Jews, e.g., providing kosher food.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, evidence was mounting that, as Jews relocated to suburbia, they stopped using urban Jewish hospitals. From 1950 to 1960, the percentage of Jews in the clientele served by Jewish hospitals dropped from one-half to two-fifths, and from two-fifths to one-third at Jewish-supported clinics.<sup>48</sup> In light of the declining population of Jews served by Jewish hospitals and their increasingly nonsectarian character, pointed questions were raised about continuing communal support for institutions that were not essentially Jewish. Although the most outspoken criticism of communal funding for health facilities did not come until the late 1960s,<sup>49</sup> the seeds of disenchantment were sown well before, due to changes in American health care and Jewish residential patterns.

In contrast to health facilities, Jewish community centers (JCCs) received a growing share of communal funds. By the mid-1960s, over a quarter of

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<sup>47</sup>Martha K. Selig, "Implications of the Use of Public Funds in Jewish Communal Services," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 36, no. 1, Fall 1959, pp. 50 – 54. See also Philip Jacobson, "Community Relations Implications in the Use of Public Funds by Jewish Services," and Jacob H. Kravitz, "What Price Public Funds?" *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 37, Fall 1960, pp. 112 – 23. For a trailblazing historical examination of how welfare programs during the Great Depression injected the government into the domain of private Jewish philanthropies, thereby setting in motion the rethinking of federated support for health and welfare institutions, see Beth S. Wenger, "Ethnic Community in Economic Crisis: New York Jews and the Great Depression" (Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1992), chap. 3.

<sup>48</sup>Charles S. Levy, "Jewish Communal Services: Health, Welfare, Recreational and Social," in Janowsky, ed., *The American Jew: A Reappraisal*, p. 261.

<sup>49</sup>In his address to the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in 1969, Hillel Levine cited the inordinate spending on medical facilities to the detriment of Jewish educational and cultural programs as proof of the wrongheadedness of communal funding. Referring to assurances offered by one federation leader that the community expressed its concern for young Jews by supporting facilities where an appendix can be removed and neuroses treated, Levine observed: "It is not our neuroses or our ruptured appendices that we wish to share with you. It is our vitality, our enthusiasm, our vision. . . . We want to build a Jewish community that is creative and not one that must concern itself with mere survival. . . . We want a change of the order of allocations. . . ." Quoted in Samuel H. Dresner, *Agenda for American Jews: Federation and Synagogue* (United Synagogue of America, New York, 1976), p. 9, n. 5.

all local spending by federations went to JCCs, camps, and youth services (the latter were mainly under JCC auspices).<sup>50</sup> Thanks to generous communal funding during the 1940s, almost 100 new centers joined the Jewish Welfare Board, the umbrella body of the Jewish community center movement.<sup>51</sup> In the two postwar decades, over \$125 million was invested in new facilities, and operational expenses grew from \$12 million in 1950 to more than \$32 million in 1965. By the mid-1960s, membership exceeded 700,000, and over 1,600 full-time personnel staffed the JCCs.<sup>52</sup>

JCCs earned such largesse by virtue of the role they played in furthering the communal agenda. As defined by Sanford Solender, a longtime associate of the JCCs, centers had a dual purpose: (1) "to affect in a positive manner the development of the personality of the Jew through Jewish group experience with skilled leadership" and (2) to meet "the group needs of the Jewish people, in particular the need for positive and active Jewish identification." The latter was to include programs particularly suited to the midcentury agenda of the larger community, with the center demonstrating "the harmony of Jewish and democratic values as it stimulates its members to participate in broad civic affairs, and advances relationships between Jew and non-Jew through intergroup activities."<sup>53</sup> In line with this, centers occupied themselves with two integral issues of community social policy in the mid-1960s — the civil-rights struggle and the government's war on poverty.<sup>54</sup> Thus, centers enhanced their importance to the community by becoming agents of the broader Jewish agenda.

Not surprisingly, the growth and generous communal financing of JCCs evoked a strong response from the other key institution struggling to win the loyalty of Jews in every local community — the synagogue. Like the JCCs, synagogues also experienced a postwar building boom. The number of Conservative congregations leaped from 350 in 1945 to over 800 by 1965, with as many as 131 new congregations joining in a two-year period during the mid-1950s. Similarly, the Reform movement's congregational body, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, boasted 300 more member congregations in 1966 than in 1948. And in the same postwar decades, Young Israel and other modern Orthodox congregations swelled the ranks of Orthodox synagogues.<sup>55</sup> According to contemporaneous surveys, syna-

<sup>50</sup>S.P. Goldberg, "Jewish Communal Services," AJYB 1966, vol. 67, p. 237, table 5-B.

<sup>51</sup>See Duker, "Structure of the Jewish Community," pp. 148–49, and Herbert Millman, "The Jewish Community Center," in AJYB 1966, vol. 67, p. 186.

<sup>52</sup>Millman, *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup>Sanford Solender, "The Place of the Jewish Community Center in Jewish Life," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 34, Fall 1957, pp. 36–40.

<sup>54</sup>Millman, "The Jewish Community Center," pp. 189–90.

<sup>55</sup>On these developments, see Jack Wertheimer, *A People Divided: Judaism in Contemporary America* (New York, 1993), pp. 4–6, and the essays of Jeffrey Gurock, Leon Jick, and Jack

gogue affiliation in smaller communities commonly reached 70 percent of the Jewish population and hovered in the vicinity of 50 percent in the larger centers. By contrast, according to one estimate, somewhere between 2 and 10 percent of Jewish families in large communities enrolled in JCCs; in smaller communities, center affiliation, while higher than in urban centers, still remained well below congregational membership.<sup>56</sup> Despite its numerical edge, the synagogue was forced to be self-sufficient, whereas the JCCs received large sums from federations. It was inevitable that these two competing institutions would clash, particularly as they operated in overlapping spheres of activity.

Conservative rabbis took the lead in challenging communal priorities that so lavishly funded JCCs. A symposium issue of the journal *Conservative Judaism* gave vent to the long-simmering anger.<sup>57</sup> Rabbi Max Arzt, a longtime pulpit rabbi and later an administrator at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, charged that the JCC “not only failed to ‘bring back the hearts of the children to the parents,’ but often widened the gap between parent and child.”<sup>58</sup> Rabbi Harold Schulweis, a prominent West Coast rabbi, identified “the very ambiguity of Center programming, the very absence of Jewish directives [as] the source of much of our irritation.” “To confine the activities of the Center to the category of ‘leisure time,’” he added, “is an ingenious semantic device wherein the genuine conflict between programs offering Jewish content and those of a general recreational variety may be skillfully eschewed.” Schulweis called for a rabbinic commission to combat what he saw as “the pampering, which passes for Jewish programming, recreationalism which passes for Jewish identification, and non-sectarian fund-raising under Jewish sponsorship which passes for vital Jewish living.”<sup>59</sup> From the perspective of pulpit rabbis, the JCCs competed with congregational programming — especially because they operated on the Jewish Sabbath — and offered Jews a secular Jewish alternative to the synagogue. Moreover, since JCCs accepted non-Jewish members, they could not even provide a Jewish environment, let alone a Jewishly meaningful program. Why, they asked, should JCCs receive lavish support from the community, whereas synagogues were left to fend for themselves?<sup>60</sup>

Proponents of the center, of course, dismissed these arguments. Respond-

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Wertheimer on the Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative synagogues, respectively, in *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York, 1987), pp. 37 – 149.

<sup>56</sup>Sklare, *America's Jews*, pp. 136 – 37.

<sup>57</sup>*Conservative Judaism* 16, Winter-Spring 1962, pp. 1 – 50.

<sup>58</sup>“Agenda for Synagogue and Center,” *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>59</sup>“Jewish Leisure and the Synagogue,” *ibid.*, pp. 13, 17.

<sup>60</sup>Bernard Ducoff, “Synagogue, Center, and Bureau: Confrontation and Direction,” *ibid.*, pp. 1 – 12.

ing to the symposium, Sanford Solender defended the JCC “as a communal institution concerned primarily with enriching Jewish group association for the resulting values in personal development and community enhancement. . . .” He conceded that membership in a JCC differed from synagogue affiliation: “The choice of Center affiliation depends only on a wish to associate with the Jewish people and the Jewish community and to share in its group life. It entails no choice of a particular type of Jewish commitment. Unfortunately, some of the authors [in the symposium] misconstrue this as ‘purposeless’ or ‘characterless’ neutrality.” The center, Solender contended, conveyed profound Jewish values through group activities. In time, “the individual can be guided through the Center experience, which is an expression of the finest Jewish heritage, to a more active part in American society as a whole.”<sup>61</sup> Given this last point, it is not surprising that centers continued to attract funds from a community more intent on encouraging participation in the larger society than Jewish parochialism.

At the heart of this conflict lay the unresolved question of the nature and meaning of Jewishness in the institutional life of American Jewry. The postwar consensus of the organized Jewish community had fashioned an agenda to guide external Jewish policy — legitimating support for Israel as part of U.S. foreign policy and opposing anti-Semitism at home as part of a vision of how American society should treat its minorities. By contrast, the organized community deferred discussion about the meaning of Jewishness, perhaps because such discussion would heighten dissension. Among the unresolved — and usually unasked — questions were the following: What was Jewish about a Jewish organization? Was it solely that it served the needs or interests of Jewish people? Or was there a Jewish ethos — based in Judaism or Jewish culture — that molded its program and outlook? And should institutions that reflected such an ethos take precedence over those that did not?

To be sure, questions about Jewish content surfaced periodically. When Oscar Janowsky was commissioned in the late 1940s to survey the Jewish

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<sup>61</sup>Sanford Solender, “The Vital Future of the Jewish Community Center in America,” *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 39, Fall 1962, reprinted in Berger, ed., *The Turbulent Decades*, vol. 1, pp. 359 – 77. See especially pp. 370, 372 – 74. See also Herbert Millman, “Jewish Community Centers,” *AJYB* 1958, vol. 59, p. 189, which describes a *Survey of Jewish Community Center and Synagogue Relationships* (1956). Among its major findings were that 30 percent of responding centers claimed to have a provision for synagogue representation, usually in the form of a rabbi, on the board; 40 percent reported informal synagogue representation in the form of synagogue lay leaders; 38 percent of centers claimed to run programs in synagogues in addition to their center programs; and about one-third reported joint programs with synagogues in areas such as adult education, music, book festivals, etc. About 25 centers held religious services in their buildings, mainly for the High Holy Days. Nonetheless, 38 out of 100 centers reported that, despite these cooperative ventures, relations with synagogues were strained, and they had developed programs to bridge the two worlds.

community center movement, he sought to focus attention on what was Jewish in the JCC. Janowsky, in fact, urged JCCs to intensify the Jewish aspects of their recreational and cultural programs; but after studying the matter, an outside committee watered down his findings to give greater priority to nonsectarian programming.<sup>62</sup> Even institutions primarily dedicated to defense against anti-Semitism were occasionally forced to justify why they were deserving of continuing support from the Jewish community. Naomi W. Cohen, the historian of the American Jewish Committee, writes of the frequent charges that the Committee was assimilationist. As a result, “‘What is Jewish about the American Jewish Committee?’ was a favorite subject for organizational introspection.”<sup>63</sup> On balance, however, these matters were regarded as minor. For in a community that was giddy with its success in achieving an unprecedented level of respectability within American society, the drive for integration took precedence over uncomfortable discussions about the nature and content of Jewish identity.

### *Efforts to Coordinate Communal Activities*

In contrast to questions about the meaning of Jewishness, the perennial communal predicament of how to coordinate, if not unify, the network of Jewish organizations received sustained attention in the postwar era. On both the local and national levels, considerable efforts were made to strengthen planning and eliminate duplication.

The driving force behind much of this integrative work was the federation movement, which increasingly monopolized fund-raising and allocations on the local level. The federations, as we have noted, were created originally for the purpose of eliminating duplication and competition in providing support for local Jewish institutions. As new agencies were formed and older ones declined in importance, it was no longer possible to distribute funds according to a predetermined formula; the joint fund-raising arm now had to weigh the relative importance of each agency in the larger communal scheme. These decisions, moreover, could not be made without a coherent plan for the long-range needs of the community. Hence, the federation became both a fund-raising *and* planning body, and the local organizations that had created the federations now became their constituent agencies.<sup>64</sup>

In the postwar era, the collective strength of the federations increased dramatically with the founding of the Large City Budgeting Conference (LCBC). Consisting of ten federations in the cities of Baltimore, Boston,

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<sup>62</sup>Oscar I. Janowsky, *The JWB Survey* (New York, 1948), and H.L. Lurie, “Communal Welfare,” *AJYB* 1948–49, vol. 50, p. 122.

<sup>63</sup>Cohen, *Not Free to Desist*, pp. 430–31.

<sup>64</sup>Elazar, *Community and Polity*, pp. 165–66.

Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Newark, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and San Francisco when first formed in 1948, the LCBC eventually included the 25 largest communities.<sup>65</sup> The chief task of the LCBC was to evaluate the work of national agencies and decide on allocations to them: first and foremost, to community relations agencies engaged in the battle against anti-Semitism; to religious institutions, such as the rabbinical seminaries of each denomination of American Judaism; to cultural institutions, such as the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and the Jewish Publication Society; to national health and welfare agencies, such as the Jewish National Home for Asthmatic Children; and to national service agencies, such as the National Jewish Welfare Board, which oversaw the work of JCCs.<sup>66</sup> By meeting regularly, bringing activists from local federations together to evaluate national activities and plan for regional and national cooperation, the LCBC emerged as a powerful institution in its own right.<sup>67</sup>

An early initiative of the LCBC illustrated both the possibilities and limitations of such national coordination. As one of its first coordinating efforts, the newly founded LCBC decided in the late 1940s to investigate the community relations field. This field came under the purview of the LCBC by virtue of the funds it allocated to national defense agencies such as the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Congress, and the Jewish Labor Committee; simultaneously, each federation represented on the LCBC also was funding a local community relations council. The LCBC was intent on eliminating duplication in the sprawling community relations field, and it also was eager to bring to heel national organizations, such as the American Jewish Committee and ADL, which ran their own Joint Defense Appeal to supplement funds received from the LCBC.<sup>68</sup>

The arena for this power struggle was NCRAC, which was slowly emerging as a force in its field.<sup>69</sup> At a NCRAC meeting in January 1950, a decision

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<sup>65</sup>Harry L. Lurie, "Community Organization," *AJYB* 1950, vol. 51, p. 139, and Elazar, *Community and Polity*, pp. 135 - 36.

<sup>66</sup>For a sample listing of funds allocated, see Goldberg, "Jewish Communal Services," *AJYB* 1958, pp. 176 - 78.

<sup>67</sup>Lurie, *A Heritage Affirmed*, pp. 356 - 58.

<sup>68</sup>This discussion draws heavily from the detailed report prepared at the time by Abraham G. Duker entitled *Jewish Community Relations: An Analysis of the MacIver Report* (Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, New York, 1952), 115 pp. On the behind-the-scenes role of the LCBC, see pp. 10 - 12.

<sup>69</sup>Founded in 1944 by the Council of Federations and Welfare Funds, NCRAC had served more as a clearinghouse than a coordinating body, since its constituents did not wish to be coordinated. Gradually it began to develop its own staff and assumed some influence by virtue of its work with local community relations councils. Jewish professionals also found NCRAC to be a more congenial partner than the big agencies. Lurie, *A Heritage Affirmed*, pp. 143 - 49, and Duker, *Jewish Community Relations*, p. 13.

was taken to launch "a cooperative study . . . of Jewish community relations work, including national and local agencies, community services, and their relationships directly through NCRAC." Selected to head the study was Robert MacIver, a non-Jewish sociologist at Columbia University, an "applied social scientist not connected with any of the NCRAC member agencies but acceptable to all."<sup>70</sup>

The MacIver Report<sup>71</sup> was highly critical of the community relations field: MacIver portrayed NCRAC meetings as "too often areas of interminable controversies and inconclusive rivalries"; he characterized the national agencies as so intent on vindicating their own activities that they completely neglected any serious self-evaluation; and he bemoaned the absence of a collective strategy for communal relations. Most damning was his depiction of the rampant duplication between national agencies such as the American Jewish Committee and ADL, both of which gathered information about anti-Semitism and issued publications to combat Jew-hatred. To justify their activities, the national agencies highlighted how they differed in ideology, mass constituencies, corporate "personality," and as separate "movements."<sup>72</sup> But MacIver had little patience for these nuances. He advocated streamlining the entire field and bringing it under the control of federations, arguing that the major work in community relations must be done "not only *in* but also *through* the locality" — i.e., the domain of each federation.<sup>73</sup>

Not surprisingly, the national agencies reacted angrily to MacIver's criticisms and rejected his recommendations. In short order, the American Jewish Committee and ADL seceded from NCRAC, fearing that their autonomy would be destroyed if they were forced to adhere to the rule of majority vote in NCRAC deliberations.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the first ambitious effort to bring about coordination in the sphere of community relations work created greater divisions within the field. Even the most powerful federations could not compel organizations to relinquish their autonomy.<sup>75</sup> Yet despite the

<sup>70</sup>Duker, *Jewish Community Relations*, p. 9.

<sup>71</sup>Robert MacIver, "Report on the Jewish Community Relations Agencies" (National Community Relations Advisory Council, New York, Nov. 1951, typescript).

<sup>72</sup>Duker, *Jewish Community Relations*, pp. 10 – 25.

<sup>73</sup>"Report on the Jewish Community Relations Agencies," p. 100.

<sup>74</sup>They rejoined in 1966 when NCRAC offered a more pluralistic vision of interactions between constituent agencies and downplayed its efforts to centralize its policy-making role. On the fear of the power of the majority in NCRAC deliberations, see *Do You Know the Whys and Wherefores That Compelled Us to Leave the N.C.R.A.C.?* (American Jewish Committee, New York, n.d.), pp. 19 – 20, and Stanley Rabinowitz, "In the Wake of the MacIver Report," *The Reconstructionist* 17, no. 16 (Dec. 14, 1951).

<sup>75</sup>An astute commentator on the community relations controversy observed that MacIver was perfectly in tune with the "integrationist" agenda of the agencies that rejected his organizational recommendations. Portraying himself as a "survivalist," fearful of the growing influence wielded by communal professionals (whom he termed "assimilationist"), Abraham

decision of the two largest national agencies to secede, NCRAC grew in strength because it served as a coordinating agency for the expanding network of local community relations councils.

Similar coordinating efforts were mounted in other areas of Jewish communal activity during the postwar decades. In the religious sphere, the Synagogue Council of America emerged as a leading voice representing the views of American Judaism.<sup>76</sup> The Jewish Welfare Board lobbied for and spoke in behalf of the JCCs. The Council of Jewish Federations increasingly provided planning services and offered to resolve conflicts between federations. To replace the wartime coordinating efforts of the American Jewish Conference, which folded in 1949,<sup>77</sup> the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations was founded in 1954 to facilitate consultation between Jewish agencies working in the international Jewish arena. Although these groups operated mainly as coordinating bodies, with no powers of coercion over their constituents, they managed to forge an unprecedented level of cooperation, largely because there was a strong consensus about the communal agenda.

Despite setbacks and conflict between organizations, it appeared by the early 1970s that the American Jewish community had achieved a high degree of organizational integration by defining its communal structure and coordinating communication between organizations. One longtime observer of the community concluded optimistically in the mid-1970s that "organizationally, the American Jewish community has never been in better condition . . . [to] meet the challenges of communal governance within a free society."<sup>78</sup>

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Duker warned "that a group of policy makers will continue to push the community, under the guise of protecting it from anti-Semitism, into the debilitating morass of assimilation. . . . The acceptance of such an instrument by survivalist Jews will depend on the extension and transformation of the NCRAC into the kind of organization in which survivalist opinion and the truth about interfaith relations would not be smothered by wishful thinking about good will such as appears in the faulty analysis presented by MacIver and endorsed by his followers in community organization and community relations." In fact, the controversy was not over the communal agenda, but over the desire of national agencies to preserve their independence. Duker, *Jewish Community Relations*, pp. 96 – 97.

<sup>76</sup>For a brief history of the organization, see Bernard J. Bamberger, *The Synagogue Council of America* (SCA Publications, New York, 1963).

<sup>77</sup>Founded in 1943 as a means to coordinate American Jewish political action during the war years, the American Jewish Conference tried to serve as a central planning body for domestic matters in the postwar years. Its backers envisaged the Conference as a body of 750 delegates of whom 150 would be selected by national organizations, 100 by the New York Jewish community, and the rest by communities from around the country. By 1949, the Conference had folded. H.L. Lurie, "Communal Welfare," *AJYB* 1947 – 48, vol. 49, pp. 138 – 39. The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations limited its scope of activities to the international arena and originally consisted of only 20 organizations.

<sup>78</sup>Elazar, *Community and Polity*, p. 340. Already in the mid-1950s, a survey of Jewish communal life offered an upbeat assessment of the trend toward unity. See Isaiah M. Minkoff,

## *Leadership and Philanthropy*

Overseeing the far-flung operations of the American Jewish community was a cadre of employed "professionals" and a volunteer leadership, both of which swelled in numbers during this period of organizational growth. Throughout the postwar decades there was some awareness of difficulties in recruiting a sufficient number of professionals to staff Jewish institutions. In hindsight, it is now possible to discern problems, albeit different ones, in the way volunteers were recruited as well.

As new institutions proliferated and existing ones expanded their activities in the postwar decades, the organized Jewish community struggled with a shortage of trained professionals to serve the community. It was estimated in 1962 that some three thousand additional rabbis and educators were needed to meet the growing institutional needs of American Jews.<sup>79</sup> The former and some of the latter at least engaged in formal preparation for their professions by studying about Jews and Judaism.<sup>80</sup> Most others in the Jewish civil service were trained in social work or other professions, but had little knowledge of Jewish life.<sup>81</sup> Not surprisingly, they were often indifferent to parochial concerns and worked instead to integrate Jews into American society.<sup>82</sup> Professionals in some institutions were notorious for taking a "value-free" approach, rather than promoting Jewish life and teachings.<sup>83</sup>

The volunteer leadership posed a different set of recruitment problems, related to the limited pool of Jewish activists. To understand the predicament, some background is needed about Jewish philanthropic giving. At first glance, philanthropy was a thriving enterprise in the Jewish commu-

"Development of Jewish Communal Organization in America, 1900 - 1956," in *Two Generations in Perspective: Notable Events and Trends, 1896 - 1956*, ed. Harry Schneiderman (New York, 1957), pp. 137 - 38.

<sup>79</sup>Freda Imrey, "Religion," AJYB 1963, vol. 64, p. 146.

<sup>80</sup>On rabbinic education in this period, see Charles S. Liebman, "The Training of American Rabbis," AJYB 1968, vol. 69, pp. 3 - 112.

<sup>81</sup>Frank Lowenberg, *Survey of Manpower Needs in Jewish Communal Service* (Bureau for Careers in Jewish Service, New York, Mar. 1971), 36 pp. By the early 1970s, according to Lowenberg, the American Jewish community employed between 17,000 and 19,000 Jewish educators, mostly on a part-time basis. In addition, there were 525 full-time employees — with an additional 77 positions unfilled at the time of the study — working in Jewish federations and community planning, another 350 in community relations work, nearly 1,600 in group work, such as recreation, camping, and informal education, another 570 positions in family services, and 81 full-time Hillel directors and 100 part-time ones.

<sup>82</sup>See the essays in Berger, ed., *The Turbulent Decades*, vol. 2, sect. 18, "Professional Education," pp. 1199 - 1269, especially Judah J. Shapiro, "The Current Manpower Crisis in Jewish Communal Services," originally published in 1968. Even in the late 1970s, the Wurzelweil School of Social Work at Yeshiva University was "the only accredited school of social work under Jewish auspices with a Jewish focus." Gerald Bubis, "Introduction," *The Turbulent Decades*, p. 1200.

<sup>83</sup>Sklare, *America's Jews*, p. 141. See also the critique by Schulweis, "Jewish Leisure and the Synagogue," pp. 13 - 14.

nity. Compared to their Christian neighbors, the percentage of Jews giving \$50 or more to individuals or to nonreligious charities was higher than among any other American group. In the higher giving categories of \$250 or more, one-quarter of all Jews gave such sums to individuals, 18 percent to religious organizations, and 17 percent to all other charities. By comparison, the respective figures for Episcopalians — who exceeded Jews in average income — were 15 percent, 9 percent, and 8 percent. The extension of loans to Jewish institutions by conservatively run American banks suggested a public awareness of Jewish philanthropic generosity.<sup>84</sup>

Still, upon closer inspection, the base of financial support was exceedingly narrow. While data on the subject are thin, it is clear that the percentages of Jews who gave varied from one community to the next, with Jews in smaller communities far more likely to donate money. Sociologist Marshall Sklare estimated in the early 1960s that in a small place like Peoria, Illinois, with an estimated Jewish population of 1,800 souls, virtually every family contributed to the annual federation campaign. By contrast, in the four largest Jewish communities — New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Chicago, which collectively comprised 62 percent of American Jewry — the percentage of givers was low. Sklare estimated that in Chicago and Los Angeles in the late 1950s only 35 percent of Jewish households contributed, and that nationally, 50 percent of Jewish households gave to federated campaigns.<sup>85</sup> In addition, most gifts were small, despite the relative affluence of Jews. In Chicago, 75 percent of all donors gave under \$100, and in Los Angeles and Philadelphia this percentage rose to 82 percent and 91 percent, respectively. Sklare speculated that, even if the income of Jews was lower than commonly assumed, the bulk of small givers donated less than half of 1 percent of their income to Jewish philanthropy.<sup>86</sup>

As a consequence, campaigns were forced to rely mainly on big givers: in Los Angeles, 2 percent of contributors accounted for 52 percent of total money donated; in Philadelphia, 2 percent gave 65 percent of donations; and in Chicago, 3 percent gave 55 percent of the total sums raised.<sup>87</sup> Needless to say, when these big givers insisted on having a say in how their money would be spent, federations, synagogues, and other communal institutions entrusted them with major decision-making roles. Ironically, American voluntarism created an oligarchic structure of Jewish leadership similar to that of the European traditional Jewish community, which also had given disproportionate power to a small group of wealthy Jews.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup>Marshall Sklare, "The Future of Jewish Giving," *Commentary*, Nov. 1962, p. 416.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 418 – 19.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 421.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 421.

<sup>88</sup>Daniel Elazar characterized Jewish leadership as "multiple-element oligarchies," which bring together "leaders of a number of different elements in the community within the decision-making group. The group itself is self-selected and stands in more or less autocratic relation-

Aside from the inherently undemocratic nature of such leadership selection, this system also impeded the emergence of charismatic leaders. Since the path to communal leadership ran through the federation system, only well-connected team players who worked within the consensus could rise to the top. Unlike the crisis years between the rise of Hitler and the creation of the Jewish state, when personalities like Stephen S. Wise and Abba Hillel Silver galvanized the Jewish world, the postwar decades produced virtually no charismatic heroes within the American Jewish community (as opposed to some renowned Israeli heroes, such as Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan, and Abba Eban). "Leadership in American Jewish life in recent years," wrote one close observer of the scene, "has developed from the office to the man, not the other way 'round."<sup>89</sup>

In an age of consensus, this system undoubtedly had some virtues. It strengthened the hands of professionals working within Jewish organizations, ensuring that the organizations would achieve high levels of bureaucratic efficiency, unencumbered by the need to mollify capricious leaders.<sup>90</sup> It also enabled wealthy and well-connected organizational volunteers to move laterally from one agency to the next, thereby creating an "interlocking directorate."<sup>91</sup> As they interacted with like-minded decision-makers and moved from one agency to the next, these volunteer leaders further strengthened the functional consensus of organized Jewish life.

### *Dissent*

The dual pillars of communal consensus — strong support for Israel and advocacy of a liberal domestic program — evoked opposition from two camps — those who still had not come to terms with American Jewish

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ship to the remainder of the community. Since each element in the coalition has its own sources of power, one element can decisively influence community decision making without the others. The more elements that are represented in the oligarchy, the more open it becomes to various points of view in the community." *Community and Polity*, p. 321.

<sup>89</sup>Will Maslow, *Structure and Functioning*, p. 37.

<sup>90</sup>For an important discussion of the measures volunteer leaders took to avoid conflict by deferring difficult questions and entrusting professionals to smooth the way through deft management, see Elazar, *Community and Polity*, pp. 315 – 17.

<sup>91</sup>Maslow, *Structure and Functioning*, p. 37. For a similar analysis of rabbinic leadership during this period, see Arthur Hertzberg, "The Changing American Rabbinate," *Midstream*, Jan. 1966, pp. 16 – 29. Hertzberg laments the disappearance of rabbinic leaders who inspired the masses and played a role in shaping communal policy. The great rabbinic heroes of the thirties and forties held pulpits, but "their careers did not . . . unfold on the stage of what they were doing within their synagogues. . . . In the minds of everyone the great rabbis of that period had individual synagogues as their base, but they served as such to exercise what was essentially political leadership in the Jewish community and on its behalf in American politics and in international Jewish affairs" (p. 16).

support for Zionism and those who questioned the domestic allocations of communal organizations. The former consisted of die-hard anti-Zionists mainly associated with the American Council for Judaism. Originally founded in 1942 by Reform rabbis who objected to their movement's pro-Zionist tilt, this group soon was dominated by a lay leadership less concerned with religious matters than with the security and status of Jews in the United States.<sup>92</sup>

As late as 1969 — two years after the Six Day War had transformed most of its former constituents into supporters of Israel — the Council held to its essential opposition to Zionism: according to Elmer Berger, its longtime executive, the Council was needed “because a number of American Jews considered Zionism a sufficiently serious threat to their identity as Americans of the Jewish faith. . . . The threat to some was to their Judaism; to others it was the character of their nationality status that was threatened. To some it was also a combination of both. In most cases, the racial peoplehood character of Zionism was, on an ethical and moral basis, something to be particularly repudiated.”<sup>93</sup> Under Berger's leadership, the Council continued to serve as a gadfly to Zionist activity in the United States during the postwar decades.

The Council achieved its greatest political success during the Eisenhower administration when Berger developed a close friendship with Henry A. Byroade, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs from 1953 to 1954. Under Berger's tutelage, and with the knowledge of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Byroade publicly chastised Israel for not integrating sufficiently into the Middle East and warned it not to consider itself as the headquarters of a “worldwide grouping of people of a particular faith who have special rights within and obligations to the Israeli state.” Although this rhetorical attack shook American Zionists, it ultimately led to no change in American policy toward Israel.<sup>94</sup>

The Council lost much of its backing during the Six Day War. Declaring in an advertisement in the *New York Times* that the war was an act of Israeli “aggression” and denouncing “the massive Jewish support for Israel in America . . . as amounting to ‘hysteria,’” the Council saw many of its stalwart supporters reject its position. One member repudiated the Council's entire worldview when he declared, “The Israelis have made me feel ten feet tall.”<sup>95</sup> Though it continues to limp along to the present day, the

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<sup>92</sup>For a highly sympathetic yet scholarly history of the Council's struggle against Zionism until the declaration of Israel's statehood, see Thomas A. Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942 – 1948* (Philadelphia, 1990).

<sup>93</sup>Quoted by Melvin Urofsky, *We Are One: American Jewry and Israel* (Garden City, N.Y., 1978), p. 69.

<sup>94</sup>Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism*, pp. 191 – 92.

<sup>95</sup>Urofsky, *We Are One*, p. 357.

Council has only a scant following.<sup>96</sup> In the first postwar decades, however, it was one of the few organizations prepared to challenge the organized Jewish community's reigning consensus.

The other major divide in Jewish life remained the chasm between religious and secular institutions, symbolized by the gap between synagogues and federations. The two worlds could barely understand each other. We need only juxtapose the perspectives of a pulpit rabbi and an organizational executive to dramatize the clash of views. Writing in the mid-1970s, Rabbi Samuel H. Dresner scathingly denounced the misplaced priorities of federations: "More attention has been given to raising money than in dispensing it. Until recently the health and social service agencies received the preponderance of communal funds with a token gift going to Jewish education."<sup>97</sup> The synagogue was the true repository of Jewish teachings, Dresner averred, and the relationship between synagogues and federations must be reversed: "The basic inequity of the Synagogue's accountability to Federation in supporting the campaign and Federation's lack of accountability to the Synagogue in the allocation and use of campaign funds must come to a halt."<sup>98</sup>

In complete contrast, Graenum Berger, a Jewish communal administrator for 43 years, demanded that the synagogue hold itself accountable to the larger communal enterprise:

The synagogues of America, despite their ties to national denominational organizations . . . have by and large pursued an autonomous pattern. They are independent, a law unto themselves, building where they like, incurring their own internal debt, while always appealing to the wider public (Jewish and non-Jewish) for supplementary support but never holding themselves accountable to the organized Jewish community. In most communities they embark on a campaign for building funds with or without the endorsement of the local Federation, for in the competition for declining resources, disciplined Federations prefer that all capital fund-raising ventures be undertaken in an orderly manner, when the economic climate is propitious, and when it will not do injury to previously approved capital efforts and the annual maintenance campaigns.<sup>99</sup>

The clash between synagogues and federations, thus, emerged from opposing views of what constituted communal discipline — and which institutions should properly lie at the heart of Jewish communal life.

Unlike the anti-Zionists, who rejected a pillar of the communal consensus, the synagogue world concurred with the fundamental ideological ap-

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<sup>96</sup>As of 1994, the Council continued to produce a newsletter entitled *Special Interest Report*, a digest of news articles critical of Zionism, Israel, and Jewish ethnicity, and *Issues of the American Council for Judaism*, a "vehicle of comment and opinion," both published in Alexandria, Virginia.

<sup>97</sup>Dresner, *Agenda for American Jews*, pp. 14 – 16.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 29. The original is in italics.

<sup>99</sup>Graenum Berger, "Historical Overview," *The Turbulent Decades*, vol. 1, p. 61.

proach of the community; rather, it took exception to the practical application of communal policies. Rabbis across the spectrum worried aloud at the large sums expended on secular organizations and overseas causes. In 1949, for example, leaders at both ends of the religious spectrum voiced similar concerns. Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath of the Reform movement's Union of American Hebrew Congregations expressed the fear in public that by allocating only four-tenths of 1 percent for religious, cultural, and educational purposes, the community was short-changing itself: "We may be destroying the very soul and heart, and in time, the body too of American Jewry in the process of saving Jews elsewhere." At the same time, Samuel Belkin, the president of Yeshiva University (Orthodox), also urged that UJA contributions should not be "at the expense of our educational institutions in the United States."<sup>100</sup> But neither questioned the fundamental premises upon which allocation decisions were based. The midcentury communal agenda, indeed, won widespread assent.

#### THE SURVIVALIST AGENDA (1967 TO THE PRESENT)

##### *From Integrationism to Survivalism*

In the late 1960s, general developments within American society as well as specific Jewish needs prompted a rethinking of the communal consensus. A series of events aroused heightened fears for Jewish safety and awakened strong survivalist concerns. The trauma of the Holocaust, buried in the American Jewish psyche since 1945, erupted into public consciousness during the trial of Adolf Eichmann held in Jerusalem in the early 1960s; in succeeding years, a flood of new books on the destruction of European Jewry heightened public awareness of the Holocaust, most notably Elie Wiesel's *Night*, the first Auschwitz memoir to achieve wide public notice, and Arthur Morse's hard-hitting critique of the American government's perfidy during World War II.<sup>101</sup> With the gradual public emergence of survivor groups from the shadows of Jewish life and the new media attention focused on the Holocaust, a powerful identification with the ordeal of European Jewry gripped large numbers of American Jews who, for the most part, had had no direct experience of the Shoah.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>100</sup>Harry L. Lurie, "Community Organization," AJYB 1950, vol. 51, p. 173.

<sup>101</sup>*While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy* (New York, 1968). On the emergence of a consciousness of the Holocaust, see Michael R. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (Hanover, N.H., 1987), pp. 4–6. On the impact of the Morse book, see Haskel Lookstein, *Were We Our Brothers' Keepers?* (New York, 1985), p. 21.

<sup>102</sup>Aside from the American Memorial to the Six Million and survivor organizations, which

In the spring of 1967, the trauma of the recent past merged with the horror of Arab armies encircling the Jewish state with the announced aim of “throwing the Jews into the sea.” The Six Day War confronted American Jewry with the fragility of Jewish life and the need to struggle to insure Jewish survival. Perhaps as never before, American Jews actively concerned themselves with the fate of coreligionists abroad. The battlefields and disputed territories of the Middle East, once distant and remote, now became as familiar as neighboring American locations. And the plight of fellow Jews in endangered communities gripped the emotions of American Jewry to a degree that surprised even those caught up in the terror. Moreover, American Jews learned to express their identification publicly — at mass demonstrations near the United Nations, in Washington, and in local communities. A new style, drawn from the confrontational politics of the 1960s, converted thousands of Jews — particularly young people — into activists fighting to insure the survival of Jews abroad. Although historians still debate whether the war caused a series of profound changes or served as a catalyst, bringing to the surface underlying shifts already discernible in the years before 1967, there is little doubt that the preoccupations and mood of the organized Jewish community underwent profound changes in the wake of the Six Day War.<sup>103</sup>

For one thing, American Jewry fully identified with Israel, an identification that galvanized the community to unprecedented amounts of philanthropic giving and volunteering. The subsequent war of attrition at the Suez Canal and the nearly calamitous surprise attack on Yom Kippur of 1973 kept American Jews preoccupied with Israel’s vulnerability.<sup>104</sup> The shift in communal emphasis was captured by Albert Chernin, the longtime executive of NJCRAC, who declared in 1978 that, in the field of communal relations, “[o]ur first priority is Israel, of course, reflecting the complete identity of views of the American Jewish leadership with the concerns of the rank and file of the American Jewish community” — a stunning admission that political efforts to shore up Israel superseded all other concerns

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were organized in the decade after 1945, no major organizations existed to commemorate the Holocaust. The Simon Wiesenthal Center was founded in 1977, and the U.S. and New York organizations created to memorialize the Holocaust were founded in the early 1980s. See the relevant volumes of the *American Jewish Year Book* for the establishment of these groups.

<sup>103</sup>The impact of the Six Day War on Diaspora Jewish communities was the subject of an international conference sponsored by the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University in late December 1994. Most of the papers concluded that the war accelerated some preexisting trends and briefly retarded the unfolding of others, but ultimately did not fundamentally transform Jewish communities outside of Israel. The forthcoming published proceedings of this conference will shed light on these questions.

<sup>104</sup>The story of American Jewry’s rallying to aid Israel in this period is told in Urofsky, *We Are One*.

of Jewish community relations organizations in the United States.<sup>105</sup>

A second front to protect endangered Jews was opened in these years when Soviet Jewry, emboldened to activism by the Six Day War, publicly identified with Israel. The emergence of "refuseniks," Soviet Jews who risked imprisonment and other forms of punishment in order to challenge their authoritarian government's ban on emigration, Zionism, and Jewish education, captured the imagination of many Jews in the United States. American Jewish organizations marshaled civilian armies in the hundreds of thousands to march on Washington and launched massive petition campaigns to pressure U.S. government officials to take up the cause of Soviet Jewry.<sup>106</sup> The late 1960s and early 1970s thus witnessed several monumental campaigns by American Jews to insure the survival and security of coreligionists abroad — principally in Israel and the Soviet Union.

Developments in the United States further propelled American Jews to turn to more parochial interests. In the weeks prior to the Six Day War, Jews who had nurtured interfaith and intergroup ties were shocked at the indifference to Israel displayed by their partners in intergroup meetings. For the most part, Christian clergy remained neutral as Arab armies arrayed themselves against Israel. Liberal Protestant clergy, allies in campaigns to build the welfare state, now deserted Jews.<sup>107</sup> By the late 1960s, the Black Power movement and the New Left drew other former coalition partners into the anti-Israel camp. Many American Jews recoiled from intergroup work, much to the dismay of ardent exponents of social activism. Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, one of the pioneers of intergroup cooperation, pleaded with only limited success to his own Reform movement not to abandon the cause of social action just because Jews "were wounded by anti-Semitic public statements of some lunatic-fringe blacks; bruised by the apparent indifference of non-Jews to the 1967 war in Israel; hurt by those blacks who . . . turned sour on interracial amity and cooperation. . . ."<sup>108</sup> Rejecting such exhortations, American Jews turned inward, resentful of coalition partners who had failed to offer understanding, let alone aid, at a time of crisis.

The turn to survivalism was prompted as well by the growing realization that the American Jewish community itself was rapidly changing — and possibly eroding. Among the worrisome trends were the following: *Geo-*

<sup>105</sup>Albert Chernin, "Jewish Community Relations — Boundaries and Priorities," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 54, Summer 1978, reprinted in Berger, ed., *The Turbulent Decades*, vol. 1, p. 601.

<sup>106</sup>The saga of the Soviet Jewry movement and its impact on the organized Jewish community awaits its historian. A partial recounting appears in William W. Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews* (Amherst, Mass., 1979), pp. 36 – 51.

<sup>107</sup>Lucy Dawidowicz, "American Public Opinion," *AJYB* 1968, vol. 69, pp. 207 – 24.

<sup>108</sup>Maurice Eisendrath, "The UAHC: Centennial Reflections," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 63, Dec. 1973, pp. 147 – 48.

*graphic mobility* was depleting the heavy concentration of Jews in the Middle Atlantic states and scattering Jews around the country; observers fretted over the possible dilution of Jewish political strength as the population spread through the country more evenly. They also feared that Jewish mobility would lower rates of affiliation, since transients would be less likely to make connections with local Jewish institutions.<sup>109</sup> *Rising rates of divorce* threatened Jewish family life and provided ample evidence that even the institution of marriage, which had been the pride of the community for both its stability and sobriety, could not withstand trends in the larger society. Moreover, communal leaders feared that they would not have the resources to aid the growing numbers of dysfunctional families. *The declining fertility of Jews* aroused fears of a precipitous shrinkage in the Jewish population. As Jewish men and women attained ever higher levels of education and stressed the pursuit of professional goals, it appeared that childbearing might be deferred so long that an entire generation of Jews would be lost.<sup>110</sup> Communal institutions became acutely aware of the limited resources they could summon to cope with these new social problems.<sup>111</sup>

Most disturbing of all was new evidence of a dramatic rise in intermarriage between Jews and their gentile neighbors: the National Jewish Population Study of 1971 indicated that rates of intermarriage had risen from under 7 percent in the 1950s to 31 percent between 1966 and 1970.<sup>112</sup> As a result of all these factors, noted social scientists Steven M. Cohen and Leonard Fein: "Jewish survival — that is, the survival of Jews as a distinct ethnic/religious group — has become a major priority of at least equal, and perhaps greater, concern to many Jews and, more particularly, to the agencies and institutions that determine the collective agenda of the Jewish community."<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>Some of these disturbing trends were discussed already in the early 1960s. See Charles Zibbel, "Suburbia and Jewish Communal Organization," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 38, Fall 1961, reprinted in Berger, ed., *The Turbulent Decades*, vol. 1, pp. 476–91.

<sup>110</sup>For a particularly alarmist view, see Elihu Bergman, "The Jewish Population Explosion," *Midstream*, Oct. 1977, pp. 9–19.

<sup>111</sup>The changing mood was captured in a pamphlet written by John Slawson, the longtime head of the American Jewish Committee, and a strong advocate of Jewish integration. Writing in early 1967, before the Six Day War, Slawson lamented "a certain malaise . . . which stems, in large part, from confusion about Jewish identity. The signs of pathology are clear. . . ." He singled out ineffective Jewish education, the indifference, if not "apostasy," of young Jews, and increasing intermarriage as evidence of the crisis in American Jewish identity. John Slawson, *Toward a Community Program for Jewish Identity* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1967), pp. 10–11.

<sup>112</sup>*Intermarriage: Facts for Planning* (Council of Jewish Federations, New York, n.d.), p. 10. See also Sidney Goldstein, "Profile of American Jewry," *AJYB* 1992, vol. 92, who concludes that the 1971 survey *underestimated* intermarriage rates (p. 126).

<sup>113</sup>Steven M. Cohen and Leonard J. Fein, "From Integration to Survival: American Jewish Anxieties in Transition," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, July 1985, p. 76.

The altered Jewish temper was well suited to its time, since by the late 1960s American society had become far more receptive to ethnic consciousness and group preservation. Inspired by black activists who turned their backs on integration and promoted black pride, different ethnic groups reasserted their cultural distinctiveness. American Jewish groups now played an active role in reconceiving the relationship between ethnic groups and the larger society, and in the process carved out a new space for Jewish ethnic assertiveness.

One of the pioneering and at the same time emblematic programs marking the shift in emphasis was launched by the American Jewish Committee in the late 1960s. Under the leadership of Irving Levine, an intergroup relations specialist, the American Jewish Committee established the Institute for American Pluralism. As it gradually evolved from the late 1960s, the program worked with white ethnic groups "to honor ethnic group consciousness and bolster self-esteem."<sup>114</sup> Historian Arthur Goren explained that, "what was *new* about the new pluralism at this time were demands for governmental intervention to alleviate the social and material plight of the white ethnic groups just as government had aided the blacks. Once the passions and the fury of powerless people were directed into meaningful channels, the argument went, the road would be open to bargaining and to accommodation between previously hostile groups."<sup>115</sup> For a brief period in the early 1970s, the Institute worked closely with prominent Catholic leaders, such as Father Andrew Greeley and Monsignor Geno Baroni. Even though the partnership with these allies collapsed within a few years, because the latter resented American Jewish Committee leadership over ethnic Catholics, the new pluralism spearheaded by the Institute helped lay the foundation for a new ethnic consciousness and group cooperation in American society.<sup>116</sup>

By the 1980s, ethnic pluralism was sufficiently entrenched to permit NJCRAC, the coordinating body of all community relations agencies, to offer a new vision of how Jewish group survival fits into the larger national pattern, a vision far removed from the battle against discrimination and for social welfare that had animated the organized Jewish community three decades earlier. In its *Joint Program Plan* of 1983 – 84, NJCRAC declared:

Jewish community relations activities are directed toward enhancement of conditions conducive to secure and creative Jewish living. Such conditions can be achieved only within a societal framework committed to the principles of democratic pluralism: to freedom of religion, thought and expression; equal rights;

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<sup>114</sup>Arthur A. Goren, "The New Pluralism and the Politics of Communal Relations," *YIVO Annual* 1991, p. 180.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 180 – 81.

<sup>116</sup>For a full discussion of this short-lived experiment, see Goren, "The New Pluralism," pp. 169 – 98.

justice and opportunity; and within a climate in which differences among groups are accepted and respected, with each free to cultivate its own distinctive values while participating fully in the general life of the society. . . .

NJCRCAC's manifesto articulated a new "politics of survival" that was to characterize the communal agenda in the closing decades of the century, a political agenda aimed at insuring the safety of Jews in Israel, the Soviet Union, and other trouble spots abroad and a social agenda fostering "creative Jewish living" in a pluralistic America.<sup>117</sup>

### *Ideological Challenges to the Consensus*

Unlike the placid mood that characterized communal life during the immediate postwar period, the latter decades of the century have witnessed the emergence of sharply defined ideological blocs within American Jewry that have provocatively challenged the consensus of the organized Jewish community. Though organized as loose coalitions of Jews on either end of the political spectrum, comprising both ideological and religious groupings, these camps have challenged basic assumptions of the community's functional consensus. Their ongoing warfare reflects the heightened polarization and animosities that have inflamed Jewish religious and organizational life in the closing decades of the century.

The first salvos in this ideological confrontation were fired by young Jews on both the right and the left of the ideological spectrum. Borrowing from the confrontational style of sixties protest movements, youthful Jewish activists marshalled their forces at mass demonstrations and sit-ins, demanding that "the Jewish establishment" change its policies. Like their counterparts in the general protest movements, they were overwhelmingly drawn from a particular generational cohort — the "baby boomers" — that was rebelling against the stodgy and misguided ways of its elders and insisting on representation in the communal arena.

In May 1968, the Jewish Defense League (JDL) exploded on the Jewish scene, giving expression to a right-wing militancy virtually without precedent in the American Jewish community. Imitating the quasi-military style of groups such as the Black Panthers and white vigilantes, the JDL initially began as an organization to protect Jewish residents and merchants in changing neighborhoods of New York City who felt at the mercy of local criminals. Although it has been associated mainly with Brooklyn Jews, the JDL, in fact, began at the Young Israel of Laurelton, a Queens, New York, neighborhood undergoing a change of population.<sup>118</sup> The JDL's founders,

<sup>117</sup>This analysis is based on Medding, "Segmented Ethnicity and the New Jewish Politics," pp. 35 – 37; the *Joint Program Plan* of 1983 – 84 is quoted by Medding on p. 36.

<sup>118</sup>Daniel Silverberg, "The JDL, Ten Years Later," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, May 5, 1978, p. 36.

Rabbi Meir Kahane, Bertram Zeiborn, and Morton Dolinsky, quickly moved from patrolling Jewish neighborhoods to confronting anti-Semitic demagogues, particularly in the black community.

The fight over neighborhood control of public schools in 1968, which evoked ugly anti-Semitic verbal attacks against the largely Jewish teachers' union in New York, attracted further support for Kahane's group, since it seemed to confirm his contention that "[w]e see here the beginnings of the 1920s in prewar Germany. This is a question of Jewish survival — nothing else."<sup>119</sup> Kahane first received coverage in the local press in May 1969, when he appeared uninvited with a group of followers toting baseball bats and iron bars to physically bar a black militant from speaking at Temple Emanu-El in Manhattan. Thereby began a career of ever more flamboyant and incendiary tactics designed to garner attention for his cause — and himself.<sup>120</sup> By the end of 1969, Kahane launched a second front when he sent his followers on missions to disrupt Soviet press and tourist facilities in New York. Soon the JDL set up paramilitary training camps to train members in self-defense tactics that would help them patrol Jewish neighborhoods. Some JDL members advocated preemptive violence against anti-Semites, and a few were accused of bombing offices doing business with the Soviets.<sup>121</sup>

The JDL's militancy confronted established community relations groups with a quandary. Although they shared the JDL's concerns about anti-Semitism and its abhorrence of the Soviet Union's treatment of Jews, they were dismayed by its tactics. On September 22, 1969, NCRAC issued a statement supported by eight of its nine national Jewish bodies — only the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America did not sign the statement — denouncing the JDL for its "paramilitary operations," which NCRAC viewed as "destructive of public order and contributory to divisiveness and terror." In June 1969, at the council's plenary session, it condemned "all private resort to paramilitary activity or other organized private use of force, threat of force, intimidation or coercion. Such tactics

<sup>119</sup>"Jewish Vigilantes," *Time*, July 4, 1969, p. 22.

<sup>120</sup>Silverberg, "The JDL," p. 39.

<sup>121</sup>Mel Ziegler, "The Jewish Defense League and Its Invisible Constituency," *New York*, Apr. 19, 1972, pp. 28 – 36. When Kahane moved to Israel with his family in 1971, the JDL began to flounder. It has periodically rebuilt its constituency, claiming up to 18,000 paying members in 1978. But its chief impact on the larger communal scene was felt in the later 1960s and early 1970s. See Silverberg, "The JDL," pp. 36 – 44; Robert I. Friedman, "Nice Jewish Boys with Bombs," *Village Voice*, May 6, 1986, pp. 21 – 26; Marcia Chambers, "Jewish Defense League's New Leader to Press Weapons Training," *New York Times*, Nov. 11, 1985, p. A17; Stewart Ain, "JDL Projects New Image and New Message," *Long Island Jewish World*, Nov. 20 – 26, 1991, p. 10; Allison Mitchell, "Citing Increased Bias and Crime, Jewish Militant Groups Live," *New York Times*, Mar. 2, 1992, p. B1.

mock the very principles of democracy to which all of us are committed."<sup>122</sup>

The established organizations also feared that Kahane would undo years of intergroup work by undermining the "social coalition" Jews had forged with other religious and lay leaders in America concerned with the advancement of human rights. Too, they responded to Kahane's mockery of their own programs: He had blamed them for insufficient "militancy" during the Holocaust era and in 1970 ordered his followers to seize the executive offices of the New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and to harass its president.<sup>123</sup>

Its nose-thumbing activities notwithstanding, the JDL sought membership in the very organization it so vigorously denounced — NJCRAC. On June 29, 1975, NJCRAC voted to reject the JDL application for membership on the grounds both of its support of violence and its denial of "the right to dissent of those who differ from its position. . . . We regard it as intolerable that any Jewish organization should resort to force to compel the Jewish community to accept its views and only its views."<sup>124</sup>

The JDL's failure to win membership in NJCRAC belies its impact on the Jewish community relations field. The JDL legitimized violent responses to anti-Semitism, demonstrating a dissatisfaction in at least part of the Jewish community with the controlled style of the established groups and a willingness to condone even illegal activities. Through its frequent references to the Nazi era, it also demonstrated how the memory of the Holocaust could serve as a powerful weapon in the arsenal of Jewish organizational life, as an instrument for recruiting followers and a justification for militancy.

In the same period when JDL was garnering headlines, a different group of young Jews attacked the Jewish community with the social criticism of the "counterculture" and New Left. In the late 1960s, Jewish college and graduate students attended the annual General Assemblies of the Council of Jewish Federations to protest the misplaced priorities of the organized Jewish community. On their bill of particulars was an insistence upon reordering the organizational agenda so that Jewish values and culture would shape the life of the community. They demanded a "Jewish education with substance, supported by dramatically increased funding; universities that would train Jewish scholars instead of being 'Jewish wastelands'; greater financing of Hillel Foundations and of the new student groups,

<sup>122</sup>*JTA Daily News Bulletin*, Sept. 22, 1969, p. 1.

<sup>123</sup>*FACTS* (Domestic Report of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith), Sept. 1974, pp. 524 – 25. By this time, Orthodox groups such as the Orthodox Union and Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah also joined in condemning the JDL.

<sup>124</sup>Memo from Albert D. Chernin to Gene Singer of JDL, dated June 30, 1975. In the JDL files of the Blaustein Library, American Jewish Committee.

religious communities, and campus journals that were proliferating; and more widespread participation of rabbis, educators, students, and other concerned Jews in community decision making."<sup>125</sup> In a stirring address to the General Assembly held in Boston in 1969, Hillel Levine, one of the more articulate student leaders, challenged the leadership of the federation world to work with the emerging generation:

We see ourselves as children of our times: we see ourselves as children of timelessness. We see ourselves as your children, the children of Jews who with great dedication concern themselves with the needs of the community, the children of those who bring comfort to the afflicted, give aid to the poor, who have built mammoth philanthropic organizations, who have aided the remnants of the Holocaust, who have given unflinchingly to the building of Israel.

We are your children, and I affirm this, but we want to be not only children, but also builders. We want to participate with you in building the vision of a great Jewish community.<sup>126</sup>

The student protesters of the 1960s, thus, wanted a greater say in how the community allocated its resources and worked particularly to redirect communal spending toward Jewish educational, religious, and cultural pursuits and away from nonsectarian causes, such as Jewish hospitals. But they sought to work within the existing federation framework, an organizational world eager to welcome their participation and coopt their leaders.<sup>127</sup>

By the early 1970s, a more far-reaching challenge to the community leadership and its policies was leveled by an organization named Breira ("alternative," in Hebrew). Formed in 1973, Breira aimed its primary criticism at Israeli policies in the territories conquered during the Six Day War. Unlike the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, Breira represented a new phenomenon — a Jewish organization that claimed to support Israel but was vehemently critical of its policies. According to its in-house, official history:

The creation of Breira was an indication that its founders and members honestly believe that there can be an alternative to the endless cycle of war and violence between Israel and the Arabs, and that American Jews committed to a strong Jewish state could actually encourage Israel to do more than it was doing to initiate peace talks. This meant in practice that Breira would break the "taboo" on public criticism of Israel within the American Jewish community. In particular, Breira gave American Jewry its first serious introduction to the "dovish" perspective on Israeli affairs . . . by hosting . . . prestigious Israeli advocates of

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<sup>125</sup>This is a summary of the students' demands provided by Philip Bernstein, CJF leader. Philip Bernstein, *To Dwell in Unity: The Jewish Federation Movement in the U.S. Since 1960* (Philadelphia, 1983), pp. 143 – 44.

<sup>126</sup>Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>127</sup>Aside from inviting Levine to address the GA, CJF leaders fawned over the young protesters. One Federation executive gushed, "We will never be the same, and we should never be the same. We should never meet again without them." Bernstein, *To Dwell in Unity*, p. 144.

mutual recognition of Israeli and Palestinian rights as the basis for Middle East peace negotiations.<sup>128</sup>

Breira also raised the hackles of organized American Jewry because it directly challenged the legitimacy of established organizations and leaders within the American Jewish community, charging them with muzzling honest debate. Breira's commission on Jewish life, chaired by Arthur Waskow, defined the organization's goals within American Jewry as follows: to find a "means of freeing debate, especially through a newly independent Jewish press; new forms for doing tzedakah (fund-raising and allocation) that are both democratic and which serve the needs of those now ignored; . . . the creation of a grass-roots based democratic structure for American Jewry."<sup>129</sup> To express their displeasure with the established leadership, some Breira leaders urged Jews to withhold financial support from the official community as a signal of their protest. Waskow asked rhetorically: "Do we have a responsibility to oppose the giving of money or support through conventional channels, if that means adding to the political power of those presently in power who we feel are blindly marching toward the destruction of Israel?"<sup>130</sup>

Breira's critique of Israeli policies, then, was intertwined with a rebellion against the leadership of American Jewry. Both Israeli and American Jewish leaders were misguided in their policies; the only recourse for concerned Jews was to alter the entire system of American Jewish support for Israel and the undemocratic system that produced such an inadequate American Jewish leadership. Breira broadcast its dual critique of Israeli and American Jewish leaders through advertisements in the *New York Times* and the *New York Review of Books*, mailings to concerned Jews, public testimony to congressional committees, and press releases.<sup>131</sup>

Breira's activities forced the organized Jewish community to define a policy regarding the rights of its own members to dissent. As the employer of the largest contingent of rabbis associated with Breira, the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation was under strong pressure to act. Rabbi Joseph Sternstein, the president of the Zionist Organization of America, questioned the president of B'nai B'rith as to why "the most articulate spokesmen for the 'Palestinian' position were the Hillel rabbis"; and though he denied any intention to meddle in the internal affairs of B'nai B'rith, Sternstein justified

<sup>128</sup>*Proceedings of Breira's First Annual Membership Conference* (Breira, New York, 1977), p. 3.

<sup>129</sup>*Breira Report*, June 1977, unpagged.

<sup>130</sup>Quoted by Rael Jean Isaac and Erich Isaac, "The Rabbis of Breira," *Midstream*, Apr. 1977, p. 15.

<sup>131</sup>Elenore Lester, letter to the editor of the *Jewish Week* (New York), dated May 1, 1977, pp. 1-2 (in the files of the American Jewish Committee's Blaustein Library).

his concern by noting that “many of these rabbis are in contact with the pliable minds of campus Jews.”<sup>132</sup> Within the B’nai B’rith, as well, voices were raised urging the organization to discipline its employees, among them that of Benjamin Epstein, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, who felt that members of the professional staff should “in their pronouncements and activities refrain from promoting views contrary to those of B’nai B’rith.”<sup>133</sup>

The president of B’nai B’rith, David Blumberg, publicly rejected these demands, asserting that “participation in Breira in no way violated B’nai B’rith policy.” But these assurances failed to still the criticism emanating from local lodges within the organization and from outside groups such as the Zionist Organization of America, the Jewish Defense League, and even Hadassah.<sup>134</sup> Some of the critics demanded that the B’nai B’rith fire Hillel directors associated with Breira. Blumberg finally convened a “blue ribbon panel” to offer recommendations on the internal policy of B’nai B’rith regarding Breira. The panel upheld the rights of free expression of employees, but recommended that they not hold office in Breira or use their identification with Hillel to endorse Breira policies or any other group’s policies that were contrary to B’nai B’rith’s position.

Other Jewish organizations debated a different issue: How should they relate institutionally to Breira? Some organizations refused to send speakers to programs that included Breira representatives.<sup>135</sup> Some agonized over whether they would be granting legitimacy to Breira if they elected individuals associated with the dissenting group to positions of influence within their own organizations.<sup>136</sup> While some argued that bringing Breira into the communal tent might serve to temper the group’s provocative policies, others wanted Breira to be treated as an outcast and thereby serve as an object lesson to other dissenters. Staff members at the American Jewish Committee issued an internal memorandum suggesting that “the best way to test whether or not Breira is prepared to become a truly responsible element

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<sup>132</sup>Quoted by Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway, “Doves, the Diaspora, and the Future of Israel: The Angry Debate Among American Jews,” *Village Voice*, Mar. 7, 1977, p. 26.

<sup>133</sup>Quoted in William Novak, “The Campaign Against Breira,” part 2, *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Apr. 1, 1977, p. 24.

<sup>134</sup>Novak, *ibid.*, pp. 24 – 25.

<sup>135</sup>This seems to have been the intention of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), which urged all Jewish organizations to avoid participation in meetings with the PLO.

<sup>136</sup>A slate of Breira sympathizers was defeated in elections held by the Conservative movement’s Rabbinical Assembly. The RA also debated but ultimately tabled a resolution calling for American Jews — and their rabbis — “to exercise self-restraint in the criticism of Israel’s policies on security, defense, borders and the ultimate components of peace.” *JTA Daily News Bulletin*, May 6, 1977, p. 2.

within the diverse and multi-faceted Jewish community is to co-opt them into the community structure. . . . One of the groundrules for such co-option might well be . . . that member agencies direct the exposition of their different views on sensitive Israel-Diaspora issues to the Jewish community itself and refrain from appealing to the general public."<sup>137</sup>

The Jewish Community Council of New Haven did in fact admit the local Breira chapter on the condition that Breira keep its criticism within the community. Other Jewish community councils took a more aggressive position and explicitly stigmatized Breira as beyond the pale. Few Jewish umbrella organizations, either on the local or national level, were prepared to offer Breira their ultimate form of legitimation — admission as a constituent member.<sup>138</sup>

The hostile communal response succeeded in sweeping Breira away and temporarily ostracized its leading members. Criticism of Israeli policies, however, persisted, particularly after the election of Menachem Begin as prime minister in 1977; after the Lebanese incursion of 1982 it became a staple of Jewish communal life.<sup>139</sup> New organizations came into being, such as New Jewish Agenda (see below) and Americans for Peace Now (see below). But even long-standing Zionist organizations found themselves riven with conflict over the proper treatment of members who objected to Israeli policies.

As dissent spread, Jewish organizations were divided over the best way to help Israel: Should they support the policies of every government on the grounds that only Israelis have the right to criticize because they live "on the frontlines" and therefore directly face the consequences of government policies? Or would the failure to criticize be taken as assent to policies that many American Jews found immoral, and thereby strengthen the hands of the very forces in Israel that were deemed objectionable?

Inevitably, these debates about criticism of Israel spilled over into a critique of American Jewish leadership. "Their religion is the religion of blind support for Israel. They do not speak for us,"<sup>140</sup> declared Michael

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<sup>137</sup>George E. Gruen and Marc Brandriss, "Breira: A Background Memorandum," Apr. 13, 1977, pp. 20–21. In the American Jewish Committee's Blaustein Library.

<sup>138</sup>The exceptions were the Jewish community councils of New Haven and San Francisco. Breira did not have enough chapters or members nor a broad enough agenda to qualify for the larger umbrella organizations such as the Presidents Conference or NJCRAC.

<sup>139</sup>Historian Jerold S. Auerbach contends that American Jewish liberalism could not abide a Likud-led, nationalist government in Israel. In Auerbach's view, this contradiction between the two parts of the postwar functional consensus has led to intensified criticism of Israel and a tilt to liberalism that is eroding American Jewish solidarity with Israel. "Are We One? Menachem Begin and the Long Shadow of 1977," in *Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews*, ed. Allon Gal (Jerusalem and Detroit, forthcoming).

<sup>140</sup>Quoted in Tamar Jacoby, "A Family Quarrel," *Newsweek*, Apr. 3, 1989, p. 60.

Lerner, the editor of *Tikkun*, a left-wing Jewish journal founded in the 1980s to challenge the community's perceived rightward tilt. In some quarters, moreover, it was feared that attempts to muzzle criticism of Israel would destroy the fabric of Jewish communal life in America, driving critics away from the organized community. As Albert Vorspan, a senior official with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations of America (Reform), put it: "The real choice now is between speaking up or turning off."<sup>141</sup> With the installation of a new Labor government in 1992 committed to a policy of actively pursuing peace initiatives, left-wing critics gained credibility and entree into the forums of American Jewish leadership. But these strategic gains did not bring a cessation of ideological conflict within the community.

The issue came to a head in early 1993, when Americans for Peace Now, a support group for the dovish Israeli movement, in existence since 1984, applied for membership in the Conference of Presidents. Opponents argued against admission on the grounds that Peace Now favored negotiations with the PLO and tilted too far to the pro-Arab position. Questions were raised, as well, about the wisdom of including a group that might paralyze deliberations within the umbrella organization by failing to submerge its organizational views to permit the conference to speak out on behalf of the community. (According to Presidents Conference rules, a dissenting member may prevent the conference from taking a public stand with which it disagrees.)<sup>142</sup>

Ultimately, these concerns were overridden by the compelling case put forth by those favoring admission: how could the American Jewish community refuse to grant legitimacy to a group that had members serving in the cabinet of Yitzhak Rabin? How could the Presidents Conference work with the new Clinton administration, which had placed several prominent supporters of Americans for Peace Now in high government positions, if it refused to work with APN?<sup>143</sup>

The pressure groups of the left have been matched by outspoken ideological opponents on the right. Some right-wing Zionist organizations, strongly supportive of Israel's Likud party, have directly challenged the legitimacy and intentions of left-wing groups critical of Israel. Perhaps the most confrontational has been a group called Americans for a Safe Israel (AFSI).

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>142</sup>Seymour Reich, quoted in *Forward*, Mar. 26, 1993, p. 16. In this newspaper report the claim is made that Americans for Peace Now had pledged to Lester Pollack, chairman of the conference, its intention to work within the consensus spirit of the organization. Henry Siegman of the American Jewish Congress rejected the need for the APN or any other new member to accept and abide by the consensus position in advance: "It is the Presidents Conference that must uphold its consensus, not the individual constituent members."

<sup>143</sup>David Twersky, "Welcome to Washington: Now Peace Now," *Forward*, Feb. 19, 1993, p. 6; Leonard Fein, "American Zealots," *Forward*, Mar. 5, 1993, p. 7.

Founded in 1971 to persuade American Jews to reject a “peace for territory” solution and to accept only a “peace for peace” formula, AFSI has spearheaded attacks on left-wing groups for over two decades. It has targeted such groups as Breira, the New Jewish Agenda, the New Israel Fund, and American Friends of Peace Now, castigating them as traitors and as dupes of, if not a front, for Arab enemies of Israel.<sup>144</sup> (See discussion of New Israel Fund, below.)

If waging war on left-wing critics of Israel has been high on the agenda of Jewish conservatives, defense of the Jewish establishment has not. Indeed, since the early 1970s, a loose coalition of conservative groups has mounted a critique of the organized Jewish community no less radical than that of its left-wing counterparts. The goal of this conservative coalition has been nothing less than the complete dismantling of American Jewry’s post-war domestic agenda and structure of alliances.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, this group targeted the most sacrosanct of American Jewish principles — the doctrine of separation of church and state. Naomi W. Cohen, the historian of Jewish separationism, has demonstrated just how deeply this doctrine was rooted in the American Jewish psyche:

From the establishment of the Republic, Jewish spokesmen set themselves up as guardians of the “authentic” American tradition, often urging conformity with the “spirit” of the national, religion-blind Constitution. . . . Jews who contested a Christian form or usage generally invoked *freedom* of religion, a doctrine common to all state constitutions.

After World War II Jewish efforts centered on the establishment clause of the First Amendment. Their broad interpretation of religious freedom under the state constitutions gave way to an even broader interpretation of establishment, which now bound states as well as the federal government.<sup>145</sup>

Jewish defense organizations worked unceasingly to shore up the wall separating church and state, believing that anything short of strict separationism endangered Jewish security and opened the floodgates to the forces bent on Christianizing America.

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<sup>144</sup>Americans for a Safe Israel has published several comprehensive pamphlets detailing these charges. See Rael Jean Isaac, *Breira — Counsel for Judaism* (1977); idem, *The Anti-Jewish Agenda* (1987); Joseph Prouder, *The New Israel Fund: A Fund for Israel’s Enemies* (1990); see also, Rael Jean Isaac, “New Jewish Agenda — Outside the Consensus,” *Midstream*, Dec. 1990.

For a history of these conflicts, see my essay, “Breaking the Taboo — Critics of Israel and the American Jewish Establishment,” in Gal, ed., *Envisioning Israel*. See also Paul M. Foer, “The War Against Breira,” *Jewish Spectator*, Summer 1983, pp. 18–23. On more recent conflicts, see Andrew Silow Carroll, “A Call for Civility,” *Washington Jewish Week*, Aug. 9, 1990, pp. 15–17.

<sup>145</sup>Naomi W. Cohen, *Jews in Christian America: The Pursuit of Religious Equality* (New York, 1992), pp. 5–6.

The first to break ranks with the community's liberal consensus were Orthodox Jews associated with the religiously right-wing Agudath Israel movement. Early in the 1960s, they came out in favor of state aid to parochial schools. Describing the shift in thinking, Marvin Schick, a leading partisan of the Orthodox campaign, claimed that

. . . most interested parties — public education officials, political leaders, teacher organizations, and Catholic and Protestant spokesmen — recognized that it was a practical (and not ideological) matter over which reasonable men might differ and supported at least some forms of federal assistance to parochial schools. Yet the bulk of the organized and articulate Jewish community robot-like invoked the holiness and oneness of the First Amendment and proclaimed their opposition to any “breach in the wall separating church and state.” This idol worship, however, did not paralyze the thought processes of Orthodox leaders who were . . . beginning to have ideas that it might be a good thing for the state to do something which might help the Hebrew Day School.<sup>146</sup>

During the 1970s and '80s, religiously Orthodox and politically conservative Jews moved the discussion beyond aid to parochial schools, questioning whether America would not be a better country if prayer had a place in the public school and religious symbols were displayed in the public square. Rather than follow the mainstream in promoting the “no establishment” clause of the First Amendment, this coalition emphasized the “free exercise” of religion clause, to insure that religiously observant Americans, including Jews, could practice their religion unencumbered. “To their thinking,” writes historian Jonathan Sarna, “the threat posed by rampant secularism was far more imminent and serious than any residual threat from forces of militant Christianity.”<sup>147</sup>

Jewish neoconservatives associated with *Commentary* magazine challenged other assumptions of the postwar consensus. In a far-reaching manifesto for change, Murray Friedman urged “a new direction for American Jews,” which would include (1) “a forthright stand on issues of national defense,” because a strong American military was the best — and only — guarantee of Israel's security; (2) a rejection of the community's “ideological bias [which] systematically favors governmental over private-sector solutions, and systematically discounts what people can do to solve their problems by dint of their own struggle”; Friedman particularly singled out the annual *Joint Program Plans* of NJCRAC as the prime expression of the “old and now largely discredited liberal agenda”; (3) a break “with the

<sup>146</sup>From Marvin Schick, ed., *Government Aid to Parochial Schools — How Far?* (COLPA, 1967), excerpted in Naomi W. Cohen, “Schools, Religion, and Government — Recent American Jewish Opinions,” *Michael* 3 (Tel Aviv, 1975), p. 377.

<sup>147</sup>Jonathan D. Sarna, “Christian America or Secular America? The Church-State Dilemma of American Jews,” in *Jews in Unsecular America*, ed. Richard John Neuhaus (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1987), p. 18.

formulas of the past . . . when [even] a significant group of black leaders and intellectuals, as well as broader segments of the black community, have begun to question them." The dismantling of Great Society programs might well benefit the economy and end the "excessive reliance of agencies on government grants," Friedman argued.<sup>148</sup>

Viewing the situation of Jews on the world scene, the coalition of right-wing forces urged the Jewish community to reassess the wisdom of its political alliances. In 1971, Norman Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary*, announced the shift in thinking that led to his journal's turn to neoconservatism: ". . . whatever the case may have been yesterday, and whatever the case may be tomorrow, the case today is that the most active enemies of the Jews are located not in the precincts of the ideological Right, but in the ideological precincts of the radical Left. . . . Jews should recognize the ideology of the radical Left for what it is: an enemy of liberal values and a threat to the Jewish position."<sup>149</sup> In time, neoconservatives and sectors of the Orthodox community would seek common cause with the Republican party and the Christian right — an unholy alliance from the traditionally liberal perspective of postwar American Jewry.<sup>150</sup>

It is not easy to measure the precise impact of this conflict between the forces of the right and left upon the organized Jewish community. Certainly, there is no evidence that either position has captured the allegiance of most American Jews,<sup>151</sup> nor has the bitter clash of forces disrupted the functioning of organized Jewish life. At the same time, the views of both groups have hardly been confined to the margins of Jewish society. Even if they rejected the arguments of one ideological camp or the other, Jewish organizations have been forced to take note of the diversity of voices within their own institutions. This is particularly evident in NJCRAC, which has been most resistant to changing its liberal stance. On issues as diverse as abortion rights and separation of church and state, the *Joint Program Plan* takes note of Orthodox dissent.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, critics on the left have forced

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<sup>148</sup>Murray Friedman, "A New Direction for American Jews," *Commentary*, Dec. 1981, pp. 37–44, especially p. 41.

<sup>149</sup>Norman Podhoretz, "A Certain Anxiety," *Commentary*, Aug. 1971, p. 10.

<sup>150</sup>For a history of recent Jewish relations with the Christian right, written from an adversarial perspective, see Naomi W. Cohen, *Natural Adversaries or Possible Allies? American Jews and the New Christian Right* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1993).

<sup>151</sup>In a 1991 survey of American Jews, sociologist Steven M. Cohen asked: "In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following items are essential, which are desirable, which do not matter. . . ." In response to an item concerning being "a liberal on political issues," 6 percent claimed it was essential, 21 percent saw it as desirable, and 73 claimed it was irrelevant. An even higher percentage, 89 percent, regarded it as irrelevant to be politically conservative. Steven M. Cohen, *Content or Continuity? Alternative Bases for Commitment* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1991), p. 72.

<sup>152</sup>NJCRAC *Joint Program Plan 1993–1994*, pp. 51, 56.

a hearing of their views at the annual plenum of NJCRAC, even if they did not succeed in forging a consensus on their views.<sup>153</sup> The contending ideological factions have forced the organized community to work with a great diversity of views and find ways to accommodate the many voices within it.

Since the early 1970s, every sphere of activity has been racked by debates over policy. When dealing with Israel, which approach best serves Jewish interests both at home and in the Middle East — one that is publicly critical of Israeli policies vis-à-vis its Arab inhabitants or fully supportive of every Israeli government? Is the survival of Soviet Jewry best insured if all emigrants are compelled to settle in Israel or are free to settle in countries of their own choosing?<sup>154</sup> On the domestic front, should Jews define policy positions on a broad range of issues, even if these are not directly related to the welfare of Jews, or should they define a narrow, more parochial agenda?<sup>155</sup> What is the most effective communal response to anti-Semitism — the judicious use of quiet pressure or the more popular form of mass demonstrations?<sup>156</sup> Given the wide disparity of judgments about these matters, especially as religious and ideological questions became entwined with the survivalist agenda, even with the best of intentions it is no longer possible to forge a consensus — and satisfy all Jews that their leaders speak for a unified Jewry.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup>In 1992, for example, the American Jewish Congress and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations proposed resolutions advocating a “moratorium on settlement growth” in Israel’s occupied territories. Although over two hours were set aside for discussion of Israeli settlements at the annual plenum of NJCRAC, it was also decided in advance that “delegates will be given a voice, not a vote, on the issue.” Larry Yudelson, “Plenum Allows Debate on Settlements — But No Vote,” *Long Island Jewish World*, Feb. 14 – 20, 1992, p. 13.

<sup>154</sup>David A. Harris, *The Controversy Over Refugee Status of Soviet Jewish Emigres* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1987); Walter Ruby, “Are American Jews Abandoning Soviet Jews?,” *Washington Jewish Week*, June 22, 1989, pp. 8 – 9.

<sup>155</sup>For a critique of the broader agenda, see Marshall J. Breger, “For Ourselves and for Others: Defining Jewish Interests,” in Daniel Elazar, ed., *The New Jewish Politics* (Lanham, Md., 1988), pp. 58 – 59. For an opposing, though nuanced, view, see Earl Raab, “The End of Jewish Community Relations,” *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Winter 1977, pp. 107 – 15.

<sup>156</sup>This issue came to a head in 1977 and 1978 when the National Socialist party of America (a small Nazi party) attempted to march through the village of Skokie, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago with a large Jewish enclave and a significant population of Holocaust survivors. Most local and national Jewish defense organizations, ranging from the Jewish Defense League to the American Jewish Committee, debated the best way to respond to the affair. For a sampling of the diverse views expressed by these organizations, see Sam Pevzner, “Skokie — A Lesson in Handling Nazis,” *Jewish Currents*, Oct. 1977, pp. 4 – 7; “NJCRAC Implicitly Endorses Skokie Jewish Effort to Prevent Nazi Marches,” *JTA Daily News Bulletin*, Feb. 1, 1978, p. 4; Naomi Levine, “U.S. Jews’ Action Against Nazis of Skokie,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, Jan. – Feb. 1978, pp. 19 – 20; “Statement on Community Response to Nazi Demonstration in Jewish Neighborhoods,” American Jewish Committee, Mar. 21, 1978.

<sup>157</sup>A more benign view of this process is offered by Jerome A. Chanes in “The Voices of the American Jewish Community,” *Survey of Jewish Affairs* 1989, pp. 118 – 37. Chanes believes

## THE CHANGING MAP OF ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE

As a result of the various trends that we have traced, the map of Jewish organizational life has been redrawn: some older agencies have gained in importance even as others have been eclipsed by upstart organizations that now command impressive levels of support. By revisiting the various spheres of Jewish organizational activity, we can more readily appreciate how massively the community has been transformed in recent decades.

### *Support for Israel*

#### PHILANTHROPY

Beginning with the terrifying weeks in May 1967 when Arab armies massed along Israel's border, the American Jewish community has been preoccupied with developments in the Middle East. One emergency appeal followed the next: first came the Six Day War, followed by the War of Attrition, followed by the Yom Kippur War of 1973, which in turn was followed by terrorist campaigns, the Lebanese incursion of 1982, and the more recent peace accords. Intermingled with these geopolitical crises were surges in emigration from endangered Jewish communities in the Soviet Union and Ethiopia and — with the fall of the Iron Curtain — a flood of Jewish émigrés from formerly Communist countries. In addition to these emergency campaigns, local Jewish federations began in the later 1970s to “adopt” poor Israeli communities through a program called Project Renewal.

The most important channel for all this aid has been the United Jewish Appeal, whose funding and importance increased astronomically beginning with the Six Day War. Since 1967, American Jews have donated approximately \$6 billion to Israel via the United Jewish Appeal.<sup>158</sup> The first dramatic increase began immediately before the Six Day War: in the two-week period May 22 – June 10, American Jews gave over \$100 million, mainly

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that the “core of the issue is not whether consensus is unravelling. The judgement of many observers is that it is a sign of increasing maturity that the American Jewish community can handle the degree of dissensus that exists on some issues without becoming defensive, as was the case in the past” (pp. 134 – 35).

<sup>158</sup>This figure is extrapolated from the claim of Israel Katz that \$5.5 billion had been donated by the UJA between 1948 and 1990. In the period from 1948 to 1966, under \$1 billion was funneled through the UJA. In the early 1990s, special campaigns to resettle Soviet and Ethiopian Jews exceeded \$1 billion. See Israel Katz, “Israeli Society and Diaspora Philanthropy: How Well Does the Gift Perform?” in *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy in America*, ed. Barry A. Kosmin and Paul Ritterband (Savage, Md., 1991), pp. 231, 235.

in cash, to the UJA and its Israel Emergency Fund. A total of \$242 million was raised in 1967.<sup>159</sup> Throughout the 1970s, contributions to the UJA grew progressively from a low of \$195 million to almost \$300 million in 1980, with the exception of the surge to over half a billion dollars in 1974, after the Yom Kippur War at the end of the previous year.<sup>160</sup> Remittances to the UJA continued to move progressively upward in the 1980s, ranging between \$300 and \$350 million annually.<sup>161</sup> Special resettlement needs in the 1990s, which arose when Communist regimes collapsed and endangered Jews fled Ethiopia, prompted even larger donations. By 1991, a banner year, the UJA received some \$668 million, a figure that included regular allocations from federations as well as receipts from a special campaign called "Operation Exodus" to pay for the absorption of Jews from the former Soviet Union.<sup>162</sup>

The actual transfer of funds from the UJA to Israel involves a series of steps that have come under closer scrutiny in the past quarter century. In order to comply with American tax regulations, the UJA transfers most of its funds to Israel through the United Israel Appeal. The latter, in turn, funds most of the operations of the Jewish Agency, a body that maintains absorption centers, agricultural and educational programs, and other humanitarian efforts in Israel. This indirect procedure for spending American Jewish philanthropy in Israel, along with the politicized nature of appointments to the Jewish Agency and the allocation of funds through a system of political spoils, aroused the ire of American Jewish leaders and their counterparts in other Diaspora countries.<sup>163</sup> Through a reconsideration of the existing structure, which became known as the "Caesarea Process," and a series of tough confrontations with Jewish Agency personnel, the Jewish federation movement reshaped the governance of the Jewish Agency to

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<sup>159</sup>S. P. Goldberg, "Jewish Communal Services: Programs and Finances," *AJYB* 1968, vol. 69, p. 291.

<sup>160</sup>Raphael, *History of the United Jewish Appeal*, p. 155.

<sup>161</sup>Katz, "Israeli Society and Diaspora Philanthropy," p. 235.

<sup>162</sup>In 1991, the UJA surpassed the Salvation Army to become the leading charity among the 400 biggest charities in the United States. *JTA Daily News Bulletin*, Nov. 3, 1992, p. 3. See also Bernstein, *To Dwell in Unity*, p. 338, and Katz, *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>163</sup>The reconstituting of the Jewish Agency lies beyond the purview of this essay, as does the effort of American Jewish leaders to restructure and depoliticize the decision-making apparatus for spending American Jewish dollars in Israel. For a trenchant analysis and critique of the latter issue, see the five-part series by Charles Hoffman in the *Baltimore Jewish Times*: "Youth Aliya: A Victim of Political Pressure and Outdated Programming" (May 16, 1986), pp. 62 - 69; "Can the WZO Deliver the Message — And the Goods?" (May 23, 1986), pp. 68 - 73; "When 'Non-Zionists' Meddle in Israeli Affairs" (May 30, 1986), pp. 61 - 66; "Reform and Conservative Challenge the Status Quo" (June 6, 1986), pp. 72 - 79; and "What American Jewish Leaders Are Doing to Change the System" (June 13, 1986), pp. 60 - 67. For a more recent analysis, see Daniel J. Elazar, "The Jewish Agency: Historic Role and Current Crisis," *The Jerusalem Letter*, no. 263, Oct. 15, 1992.

make the entire system more accountable to its American funders.<sup>164</sup>

A further step designed to involve American donors more directly in Israeli projects was launched in the late 1970s under the name "Project Renewal." The purpose was to enable American givers to apply their expertise directly to social problems in Israel and to link local federations with localities in Israel. The origins of this program date to a conference on human needs convened under the auspices of the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency in 1969. Remarkably, this was the first time that federation leaders participated in a discussion about major internal Israeli activities in such areas as housing, education, welfare, or health. "The object of the Israeli[s] . . . was to develop a model by which Diaspora Jewry would become involved in the practical implementation of the projects, not just their financing," writes historian Menahem Kaufman.<sup>165</sup> It took another decade to implement an actual program. When the new Begin government came to power in the late 1970s, it proposed a special \$2-billion UJA campaign to rebuild Israeli slums. Although the UJA rejected the plan out of hand, a structure gradually evolved through which American donors could be exposed to Israel's social problems and its bureaucratic way of doing business.

The virtue of Project Renewal from the perspective of the UJA was that it linked American Jewish donors personally with a specific Israeli project by twinning a particular Jewish federation with a locality or institution in Israel. As historian Kaufman observes:

Prior to 1978/79 UJA fund-raisers were aware of the socio-economic gap in Israeli society and of the hard-core social problems such as poverty, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, mental retardation and drug addiction, but did not consider that such facts would encourage contributions. . . . "Project Renewal" changed this approach by trying to give the poor the means for self-rehabilitation. American Jews who came to Israel on UJA "Project Renewal" missions understood, on the basis of their own personal experience, the need to build viable communities.<sup>166</sup>

This first-hand involvement rapidly enlisted federation support. By 1985, approximately "forty federations had appointed their own representatives in Israel, in most cases to work with Project Renewal, but at least in four

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<sup>164</sup>For a good overview of these complex bureaucratic arrangements, see the article on the "Jewish Agency" in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 10, pp. 26 – 34. On more recent developments, see the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* Year Book for 1988/89, pp. 363 – 64. For some press reflections of the strains, see Eliezer D. Jaffe, "Nobody Cares About U.J.A.," *Jewish Spectator*, Summer 1983, pp. 44 – 45, and Aliza Marcus, "UJA's Chief Resignation a Chance to Reassess Agency's Mission," *Jewish Week* (New York), Mar. 15 – 21, 1991, p. 20.

<sup>165</sup>Menahem Kaufman, "Envisaging Israel: The Case of the United Jewish Appeal," in Gal, ed., *Envisioning Israel*, p. 31 of ms.

<sup>166</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 33 – 35.

— New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and San Francisco — to be comprehensive representatives of federation interests and local community programs in the Jewish state," writes Daniel Elazar.<sup>167</sup> Funding for such programs also soared: In the 12-year period from its inception to 1991, \$372.7 million was spent in Israeli neighborhoods linked to local Jewish federations in the United States.<sup>168</sup>

Dissatisfaction with the system of allocations made by the Jewish Agency, coupled with a desire to earmark contributions for specific types of projects in Israel, has led to the growth of organizations in the United States that function independently of the United Jewish Appeal. The annual listing of Jewish organizations published in the *American Jewish Year Book* demonstrates that the number of "friends of" Israeli institutions has surged in the post-1967 period to include support for yeshivahs and other educational institutions, museums and cultural enterprises (for example, American Friends of Beth Hatefutsoth), health organizations such as the Magen David Adom, and even a friends group of the Israeli Defense Forces.<sup>169</sup> According to one estimate, by the late 1980s, some \$500 to \$600 million was raised annually in the United States for Israeli causes of which the UJA share was approximately 60 percent.<sup>170</sup>

The largest fund-raising organization for Israeli needs outside the UJA structure is Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization. Hadassah, in fact, is the third largest Jewish charitable organization in the United States and ranks 44th among the 100 largest U.S. charities. In 1990, Hadassah members raised and earned over \$74 million through their national structure of local chapters.<sup>171</sup> Hadassah earmarks its funds for specific medical needs in Israel, most notably its Hadassah hospitals and clinics in Jerusalem, and vocational training. In recent years, the organization has added to its primary mission by assuming a variety of educational roles within the

<sup>167</sup>Daniel J. Elazar, "Developments in Jewish Community Organization in the Second Postwar Generation," in *American Pluralism and the Jewish Community*, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset (New Brunswick, N.J., 1990), p. 176.

<sup>168</sup>*United Israel Appeal — Annual Report, 1991*, p. 17.

<sup>169</sup>Writing in the early 1990s, the sociologist Chaim Waxman counted more than 80 organizations devoted to Zionist and pro-Israel activities listed in the *American Jewish Year Book*. In addition to these, 55 of the largest national Jewish organizations, members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, also place major emphasis on pro-Israel activities. Waxman contends that, whereas many of these organizations were established for the purpose of enhancing and strengthening Israel, today Israel is vital for *their* continued vitality. Chaim I. Waxman, "All in the Family: American Jewish Attachments to Israel," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 8, 1992, pp. 134, 144.

<sup>170</sup>Katz, "Israeli Society and Diaspora Philanthropy," p. 234.

<sup>171</sup>"Hadassah Ranked Third Largest Charity by *Non-Profits Times*," Hadassah press release dated Nov. 19, 1992. Hadassah ranks behind the UJA and the Jewish Community Center Association in total dollars raised.

United States. It sponsors over 85 Hebrew-speaking groups that offer an intensive four-year curriculum of language instruction; over 300 additional groups provide a setting for education on other Jewish topics.<sup>172</sup> Other programs help alert Hadassah members to medical issues of particular concern to women in the United States, such as breast cancer. But the organization continues to devote the bulk of its energies and personnel to support of medical facilities in Israel.

The most controversial philanthropy for Israel created by American Jews in recent decades is the New Israel Fund (NIF), founded in 1979 by Jews on the left who were critical of Israel's policies — particularly under Likud-led governments — unhappy with the orientation of Jewish Agency allocations, and desirous also of direct involvement with Israeli recipients. The New Israel Fund has served as a financial conduit to groups in Israel it sees as promoting social justice and positive social change. These include the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and other groups that foster the civil rights of Israeli Jews and Arabs, ameliorate the suffering of abused women and children, as well as victims of discrimination, and work toward Arab-Jewish reconciliation. The goal, according to former chairman David Arnow, is to reshape Israeli society: "Our concept of philanthropy for Israel must be broadened to include not only *tzedakah*, providing concrete needs and services, but also *tikun*, the healing, mending and transformation of a suffering society."<sup>173</sup>

In virtually all of its public pronouncements, the New Israel Fund has justified its work on the basis of Israel's Declaration of Independence. Israel, it proclaims, must be true to its founders' original dream: "To be a state based on freedom, justice, and peace envisaged by the prophets of Israel"; to be a state that will "ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex."<sup>174</sup> Based on these self-declared ideals, American Jews can serve as guardians of the true Israel: "The fight to preserve the founding vision of Israel has been raging and has finally shaken the American Jewish community," claimed Arnow. "Today we stand at the head of a movement to build the kind of Israel we too long took for granted."<sup>175</sup>

The Fund also invokes Jewish tradition and American democratic values to justify its programs. Its publications hark back to the prophets of Israel and then intertwine Jewish traditions with American values: "In our view, the values of democracy are not merely consonant with Jewish values; they

<sup>172</sup>Rahel Musleah, "The Identity Superhighway," *Hadassah Magazine*, Mar. 1994, p. 10.

<sup>173</sup>Marvin Schick, "New Israel Fund Pours Leftist Salt on Jewish Wound," *Long Island Jewish World*, Dec. 19 – 25, 1986, p. 6.

<sup>174</sup>Letter to the editor in defense of the New Israel Fund against attack by Americans for a Safe Israel. *Jewish Week* (New York), Sept. 21, 1990, pp. 28, 46.

<sup>175</sup>*JTA Report*, July 3, 1992, p. 4.

are inseparable from them. In our view, they are not merely afterthoughts to the basic question of Israel's safety; they are part and parcel of that question."<sup>176</sup> Therefore, by supporting Israeli organizations that foster democracy, tolerance, and pluralism, NIF is promoting the best in Jewish and American traditions and binding Israel and America more closely.

The Fund's religious and democratic rhetoric has not spared it the kinds of attacks leveled by the right against left-wing critics of Israel. Americans for a Safe Israel issued a pamphlet denouncing the Fund, approvingly quoting Ze'ev Chafets's quip that the NIF people wish to transform Israel into a state that will "meet the approval of the ACLU, *The Nation* magazine, and the Sierra Club."<sup>177</sup> More ominously, the pamphlet charges that the NIF "serves to provide the financial muscle to a handful of Israel extremists who, lacking the electoral mandate to radically transform the Jewish State, seek a constituency in New York and Berkeley that they cannot muster in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem."<sup>178</sup> According to this reading, the Fund subverts rather than encourages Israel's democratic process because it favors extremist groups that have no support in Israel. Another critic of the NIF has charged that the group is "a virtual Who's Who of Israel's American Jewish critics."<sup>179</sup>

Despite the criticism, the New Israel Fund has flourished: its allocations have steadily increased, from \$80,000 in 1980 to over \$9.4 million in 1993.<sup>180</sup> Moreover, it has been publicly defended by leading members of the American Jewish establishment. In response to attacks by Americans for a Safe Israel, a public letter of support was issued in 1990 defending the legitimacy and Zionist credentials of the New Israel Fund. It was signed by past chairpersons of the Council of Jewish Federations, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, the United Jewish Appeal, and the heads of all the non-Orthodox rabbinical seminaries.<sup>181</sup>

The New Israel Fund won such legitimation by virtue both of its close ties with Israeli institutions and the strong credentials of its supporters as Zionists and workers within the established American Jewish community. When Jerusalem's mayor, Teddy Kollek, publicly endorsed the work of the NIF and its contribution to Israeli society,<sup>182</sup> it became much harder to delegitimize the Fund. Moreover, defenders of the NIF could claim that

<sup>176</sup>From the New Israel Fund's *Guide to the Issues, Grantees, and Programs*, 1991, p. ii.

<sup>177</sup>Joseph Puder, *The New Israel Fund: A New Fund for Israel's Enemies* (Americans for a Safe Israel, New York, 1990), p. 30.

<sup>178</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>179</sup>Rafael Medoff, "The New Israel Fund — For Whom?" *Midstream*, May 1986, p. 15.

<sup>180</sup>Cynthia Mann, "The Rise of the New Israel Fund," *Moment*, Oct. 1994, p. 86.

<sup>181</sup>*Jewish Week* (New York), Sept. 21, 1990, pp. 28, 46. Although the president of Yeshiva University did not sign the letter, two other leaders of modern Orthodoxy did lend their names — Rabbis Emanuel Rackman and Irving Greenberg.

<sup>182</sup>Letter to the *Jewish Week* (New York), Sept. 21, 1990, p. 32.

“among the people explicitly smeared [by opponents of the Fund] are many who hold positions of enormous responsibility in the most important (and, for that matter, the most mainstream) organizations in American Jewish life.”<sup>183</sup> Even the executive vice-president of the national United Jewish Appeal, Rabbi Brian Lurie, has defended the Fund as a valuable adjunct to his own organization: “It challenges the establishment to rethink its direction and reprioritize” and also appeals to uninvolved Jews.<sup>184</sup> Since the New Israel Fund officially encourages its donors to give to the UJA-Federation and at present siphons off only a fractional sum from the larger communal campaigns, the UJA-Federation takes an officially benign view of the NIF activity.

#### LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY

Alongside the vast fund-raising machinery, American Jewry has also developed political mechanisms to lobby in behalf of Israel. The need for such lobbying was first recognized after the 1973 Yom Kippur War as a result of a development that significantly reshaped relations between Israeli and American Jews: U.S. government financial aid to Israel increased astronomically. Put in dollar terms, American foreign aid to Israel leaped from somewhere between \$25 and \$50 million to approximately \$2 billion annually as part of the disengagement treaties arranged by Henry Kissinger in the wake of the Yom Kippur War. Compared to these staggering sums, the generous contributions of American Jewry ceased to be the major source of foreign assistance to Israel’s fledgling economy, falling to roughly one-tenth of congressional appropriations to that country. As a consequence, the greatest contribution American Jewry could make to Israel was to insure that high levels of U.S. aid continued, by staving off efforts to cut these large appropriations.<sup>185</sup> “The name of the game, if you want to help Israel,” declared Morris Amitay, the executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) from 1975 to 1981, “is political action.”<sup>186</sup>

In the 1970s, then, sectors of the organized community that previously had paid scant attention to Israel-related matters now threw their energies and resources into such lobbying. The Council of Jewish Federations formed an Israel Task Force, and the community relations field shifted much of its personnel and budget to the task of explaining Israel’s needs

<sup>183</sup>*Jewish Week* (New York), Sept. 21, 1990, pp. 28, 46.

<sup>184</sup>Mann, “Rise of the New Israel Fund,” p. 88.

<sup>185</sup>Wolf Blitzer, “The AIPAC Formula: Why the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Is Washington’s Most Effective Lobby — and American Jewry’s Newest Glamour Organization,” *Moment*, Nov. 1981, p. 22.

<sup>186</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.

to the American public. In the early 1970s, for example, NJCRAC estimated that 65 percent of its budget was spent on activities for Israel and Soviet Jewry. The American Jewish Committee spent between 25 and 50 percent of its budgets on Israel-related programs, while the ADL allocated 30 percent to Israel programming, and the American Jewish Congress, though less involved with Israel then, assigned it 14 percent of its budget.<sup>187</sup>

The overall responsibility for lobbying for Israel was assumed by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and AIPAC. Both had been founded in the 1950s and had played a modest role prior to 1967. The needs of Israel for political support catapulted these two organizations to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s. After a long process of developing coordination, the Conference of Presidents took responsibility for speaking to the executive branch of the American government on matters pertaining to Israel, and AIPAC dealt mainly with the legislative branch.

As previously noted, the Presidents Conference was founded in the mid-1950s at a time when Jewish groups felt a need to respond to the perceived tilt of the Eisenhower administration away from Israel. In line with the American Jewish agenda of the time, the conference initially defined its objectives in terms of America's role as the guardian of international freedom and order. Convening in March 1955, the 20 national Jewish organizations originally comprising the conference declared their goals to be: (1) "The defense of America and the welfare of its people"; (2) "the spread of freedom and the attainment of peace throughout the world"; and (3) "the attainment of peace, development and security for the people of Israel in their ancestral homeland."<sup>188</sup> By 1990 the group had grown to include 48 national Jewish organizations and 8 official observers. More important, it forthrightly defined its purpose "to strengthen the US-Israel alliance and to protect and enhance the security and dignity of Jews abroad."

The Presidents Conference has become the umbrella under which national Jewish organizations "develop consensus for collective action and for enhancing the work of its member organizations to assure the physical safety and rights of Jews and Jewish communities overseas."<sup>189</sup> Particularly since the late 1970s, when Rabbi Alexander Schindler headed it, the chair-

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<sup>187</sup>This analysis is based on an insightful article by Gary S. Schiff, "American Jews and Israel: A Study in Political Conduct," *Forum* 24, 1976, pp. 23 – 28, 35 – 38, and Edward S. Shapiro, "American Jewry and the State of Israel," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Winter 1977, p. 3.

<sup>188</sup>Declaration of the Conference of Jewish Organizations, Mar. 5 – 6, 1955.

<sup>189</sup>Pamphlet issued by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (New York, 1990). The official observers were the American Jewish Committee, American Sephardi Federation, Council of Jewish Federations, Development Corporation for Israel, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Joint Distribution Committee, Poalei Agudath Israel, and the United Jewish Appeal. Several of these joined the conference as full members in the 1990s, as did Americans for Peace Now.

person of the Presidents Conference has assumed the role of de facto spokesperson for the American Jewish community on international affairs — especially matters related to the security of Israel. The authority of the conference, then, is primarily based on its ability to develop consensus among the largest Jewish organizations and thereby claim to speak on behalf of the vast majority of affiliated American Jews.

Its counterpart in the legislative arena, AIPAC, developed along very different lines. Founded in 1954 as the American Zionist Council on Public Affairs (and renamed in 1959), AIPAC evolved from its roots as a Zionist organization to become like many Washington-based lobbying and consulting firms. Whereas the founding executive director of AIPAC, Sy Kenen, came out of the Zionist movement, his successors and other staff members have been recruited from the world of Washington legislative assistants and lobbyists who had direct experience with the federal bureaucracy, rather than longtime activists within the Jewish community. Thus, for example, when the Republican party controlled the executive branch in the 1980s, AIPAC recruited professionals who had worked for the Republican administration.<sup>190</sup>

The work of AIPAC has been built on a three-pronged support system. First, its staff members monitor all items relating to Israel in pending legislation. Second, the approximately 55,000 contributors who form its membership base are enlisted as lobbyists. These grassroots supporters are frequently tapped to lobby locally and when necessary to travel to Washington to meet with their representatives. Third, AIPAC has integrated its work with that of other Jewish organizations so as to bring about a high level of coordination. It has observer status with the Conference of Presidents, and its executive committee includes leaders of major national Jewish organizations and of the umbrella groups such as NJCRAC and the Council of Jewish Federations. These contacts have lent a legitimacy to its actions, enabling AIPAC to claim widespread Jewish backing. Moreover, it created an interlocking leadership structure to further build consensus on matters pertaining to Israel.<sup>191</sup>

Although it had worked quietly and effectively behind the scenes since the 1950s, AIPAC became a powerful organization only during the 15 years after the Yom Kippur War. It became, according to one Washington insider, “the sexy Jewish organization.”<sup>192</sup> AIPAC’s budget soared in this period, jumping from \$300,000 in 1973 to \$1.8 million in 1981 to over \$7 million during its peak years of influence in the late 1980s.<sup>193</sup> Its staff grew

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<sup>190</sup>Peter Y. Medding, *The Transformation of American Jewish Politics* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1989), pp. 12, 19.

<sup>191</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 17 – 19.

<sup>192</sup>Blitzer, “The AIPAC Formula,” p. 22.

<sup>193</sup>David Shipler, “On Middle East Policy, A Major Influence,” *New York Times*, July 6,

as well to encompass five regional offices and some 70 employees.

Particularly during the 1980s, AIPAC won strong respect from Israeli government officials for its intensive lobbying in support of appropriations for Israel, as well as its efforts to strengthen the strategic relationship between the United States and Israel. In the Reagan years, for example, it promoted Israeli involvement in the space-based defense programs.<sup>194</sup> Ironically, it achieved its greatest prominence in defeat. In 1981, apparently without prior consultation with the Israeli government, AIPAC decided to launch an uncompromising battle against the Reagan administration's plans to sell AWACS surveillance aircraft to Saudi Arabia. Although it lost the battle, AIPAC proved its mettle to the administration and demonstrated its savvy to the Israeli government.<sup>195</sup>

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, AIPAC suffered a series of blows that forced it to reconsider its strategies. First came embarrassing news reports alleging that AIPAC had monitored and blacklisted politicians and even prominent Jews who were critical of Israeli policies. Next, AIPAC publicly locked horns with President George Bush over loan guarantees to Israel. This was followed by the gaffe of a volunteer leader whose bragging about AIPAC's domination of government officials landed on the front pages of American newspapers. The most serious blow came from the shift in governments in Israel. The incoming Rabin government did not hide its resentment of what it perceived as AIPAC's pro-Likud bias and excluded the organization from key decisions. The damage to its once formidable clout forced AIPAC to reassess its role and tactics.<sup>196</sup>

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1987, p. 4, and Chuck Alston, "AIPAC Working to Shore Up Its Clout with Congress," *Congressional Quarterly*, Feb. 18, 1989, p. 298.

<sup>194</sup>Shipler, "On Middle East Policy," p. 4.

<sup>195</sup>Shipler, *ibid.*, p. 4, and Blitzer, "The AIPAC Formula," pp. 27 – 28. AIPAC also drew the ire of elected officials who complained that it was too powerful. It has been blamed for engineering the defeat of congressmen who have voted against Israel's interests and of stifling congressional discussion of Israel's policies. Robert Pear and Richard Berke, "Pro-Israel Group Exerts Quiet Might As It Rallies Supporters in Congress," *New York Times*, July 7, 1987, p. A8.

<sup>196</sup>On these developments, see James David Besser, "The Jewish Lobby: Is the Approach Too Narrow," "How AIPAC Flexes Its Muscles," and "The Trouble with AIPAC," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Mar. 11, 1988, Mar. 18, 1988, and Nov. 23, 1992; Thomas L. Friedman, "A Pro-Israel Lobby Gives Itself a Headache," *New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1992, sect. 4, p. 12; Jonathan Broder, "Lobby Under Fire," and "Tom Dine Gives Up Reins at AIPAC," *Jerusalem Report*, Apr. 9 and Nov. 5, 1992. Robert I. Friedman, "Israel Lobby's Blacklist," and "AIPAC with McCarthy," *Village Voice*, Aug. 4, 1992, pp. 25 – 28, and Aug. 25, 1992, pp. 19 – 20, filter some of these questions through a sensationalist screen. See also AIPAC's response in the Aug. 18, 1992, issue, p. 4. It was symptomatic of the tense relationship between AIPAC and the Rabin government that a vice-president of the lobbying organization was forced to resign because he referred to Israel's deputy foreign minister as a "slimeball." "Second AIPAC Leader Quits After Insulting Israeli Official," *Jewish Week* (New York), July 9 – 15, 1993, p. 7.

In addition to building a well-coordinated lobbying apparatus, American Jews have also created over 80 political-action committees, PACs, to help fund the election campaigns of pro-Israel candidates. Unlike AIPAC, which is not a political-action committee but a registered domestic lobby, these PACs operate much like the 4,000 or so other groups that funnel money to candidates supportive of a favored position. PACs were created in the early 1970s as part of election reforms designed to weaken the influence of wealthy donors. They enable Americans who share a common political agenda to consolidate contributions and build up electoral war-chests. Pro-Israel PACs provide campaign contributions to candidates with a strong record of support for Israel. In the 1980 election, 7 pro-Israel PACs functioned and doled out some \$300,000 to candidates; six years later, 75 such PACs disbursed \$3.4 million, particularly to candidates serving on key congressional committees that deliberated on legislation affecting Israel.<sup>197</sup> In addition to their role as supporters of pro-Israel candidates, the PACs serve as a vehicle for involving unaffiliated individuals in Jewish group activities. The 700 members of Chicago's CityPAC, for example, consist mainly of young people in their twenties and thirties who were galvanized by the opportunity for political involvement into a new kind of Jewish activism.<sup>198</sup>

Rounding out the pro-Israel advocacy groups are a relatively new breed of organizations created since the early 1980s with the avowed aim of offering American Jews "alternative voices to the large, mainstream organizations," voices that specifically speak for Palestinian-Israeli reconciliation. The largest of these is Americans for Peace Now (APN), which claimed some 7,000 – 8,000 members by 1990. Founded in 1982 as a support group for the Israeli Peace Now movement, offering its representatives a platform within the American Jewish community, APN has become more active on the domestic political scene. In 1992 it played a role at the Democratic National Convention in preventing passage of a plank critical of Israel;

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<sup>197</sup>Michael J. Malbin, "Jewish PACs: A New Force in Jewish Political Action," in Elazar, ed., *The New Jewish Politics*, pp. 51 – 52, and Alan M. Fisher, "Jews and American Politics in 1986: Issues, Votes, PACs, and Power," in *Survey of Jewish Affairs*, 1987, pp. 123 – 40. Periodically, controversies have flared over the way that pro-Israel PACs disburse their funds. Since they favor candidates who are sympathetic to appropriations to Israel, PACs have funded many Republicans and supporters of the Christian right. Liberals who regard the Democratic party as the true home of American Jews and who see it as the best protector of domestic Jewish interests have questioned the wisdom of the alliance with the right. See Robert Kuttner, "Unholy Alliance," *New Republic*, May 26, 1986, pp. 19 – 25. In order to provide supporters of Israel with a multi-issue approach that would evaluate candidates on a range of matters pertaining to Jewish interests, particularly as defined by politically liberal Jews, MIPAC — the Multi-Issue PAC — was formed in 1984. See Aaron Rosenblum, "MIPAC Comes to Town," *Moment*, Nov. 1985, pp. 20 – 25.

<sup>198</sup>Jeffrey Weintraub, "Chicago PAC Proves a Potent Force," *Forward*, May 1, 1992, p. 1.

simultaneously it lent support to the campaign to secure a \$10-billion loan guarantee for the resettlement of Russian Jews in Israel.<sup>199</sup> Among the smaller groups with a similar orientation are Project Nishma (founded in 1988), the International Center for Peace in the Middle East (1982), the Jewish Peace Lobby (1989), and the Jewish Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (founded in 1982).<sup>200</sup> These groups generally consist of few members but offer a base in the United States to Israeli peace groups, such as Yesh Gevul. They also provide a platform for prominent American Jews to lobby in Washington, and they periodically place ads in the general and Jewish press promoting their views on the Middle East peace process. For example, in August of 1993, Project Nishma circulated an advertisement in support of the impending peace accords with the PLO, contending that "when it comes to Israel's security, nobody knows more than Yitzhak Rabin. *Nobody*."<sup>201</sup>

Since the accords were signed, these groups have received more favorable attention, but they have also served as models for those on the right who object to the Rabin policies. When they opposed the stance of the Likud-led governments in Israel, peace activists argued that "the American Jewish community and specific Israeli government policies do not have to go hand in hand."<sup>202</sup> The same argument is now employed by Zionist organizations on the right that question the wisdom of the peace accords. Groups such as Americans for a Safe Israel, Coalition Against U.S. Troops on the Golan Heights, and American Jewish Coalition for a Safe Peace seek to influence public and media opinion against territorial compromise.<sup>203</sup> Thus, new organizations are challenging the American Jewish consensus on Israel and adding to the cacophony of voices directed at the administration and the public in the name of American Jewry.

### *Support for Soviet Jewry*

Even as it threw enormous resources of funding and personnel into support of Israel, the organized Jewish community simultaneously waged a quarter-century campaign to aid Soviet Jewry. The reemergence of the

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<sup>199</sup>On APN, see James David Besser, "Out of the Wilderness," and "Peace Now Joins the Mainstream," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Sept. 25, 1992, pp. 56 – 58, and Apr. 2, 1993, pp. 44 – 47. For a more critical perspective, see Rael Jean Isaac, "A Trojan Horse Among Presidents," *Midstream*, May 1993, pp. 2 – 7.

<sup>200</sup>Andrew Silow Carroll, "Peace Now, Now," *Washington Jewish Week*, July 19, 1990, p. 9.

<sup>201</sup>*Washington Jewish Week*, Aug. 12, 1993, p. 9.

<sup>202</sup>Quoted in Carroll, "Peace Now, Now," p. 9.

<sup>203</sup>See, for example, Stewart Ain, "We Are Not Going to Give Up," *Jewish Week* (New York), Feb. 10, 1995, p. 10.

“Jews of Silence” — as Elie Wiesel dubbed them — as vocal activists, the revival of Jewish life in the Soviet Union, and the emigration of nearly one million Jews long cut off from contact with their coreligionists by brutally repressive Communist regimes constitutes an epic saga of 20th-century Jewish history. So too does the Soviet Jewry movement stand as an unprecedented and heroic chapter in the annals of American Jewry. Haunted by its impotence to rescue European Jewry during the Holocaust era and inspired by domestic protest movements during the 1960s, American Jewry mobilized grassroots organizations in every major city to stage mass demonstrations and other forms of public protest, even as their national organizations lobbied in Washington to convince elected officials that it was a moral imperative to place the treatment of Soviet Jews at the center of deliberations between the two superpowers. The culmination of these efforts came in December 1987, when 250,000 Jews from all across the country converged on Washington for a mass demonstration jointly sponsored by 50 national Jewish organizations and 300 local federations and community councils.<sup>204</sup> This display of unity, however, was the exception in the history of the struggle for Soviet Jewry, a movement that achieved great successes despite fractious debates and organizational infighting.

In the early 1950s, the American Jewish Committee sponsored the first significant studies exposing anti-Semitism behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>205</sup> The major community relations organizations periodically issued public statements denouncing anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, but a concerted campaign to aid Jews trapped behind the iron curtain began only in the early 1960s.<sup>206</sup> In the face of mounting anti-Semitic attacks in the Soviet Union, which included the dissemination of hate literature under government auspices, the closing of synagogues, and a ban on matzah baking, two small groups were founded in 1963 to fight Soviet repression — the Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism and the American League for Russian Jews. In addition, two prominent American Jews, Arthur Goldberg and Abraham Joshua Heschel, began to lobby national organizations to em-

<sup>204</sup>Lawrence Grossman, “Jewish Communal Affairs,” *AJYB* 1989, vol. 89, pp. 227 – 28.

<sup>205</sup>Solomon M. Schwarz, *The Jews in the Soviet Union* (Syracuse, 1951), and Peter Meyer et al., *The Jews in the Soviet Satellites* (Syracuse, 1953).

<sup>206</sup>The only scholarly book on the history of this movement ends with developments in 1977; see William W. Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jewry* (Amherst, Mass., 1979). For a fine shorter essay on the history of the movement, which carries the story into the mid-1980s, see Paul S. Appelbaum, “The Soviet Jewry Movement in the United States,” in *Jewish American Voluntary Organizations*, ed. Michael N. Dobkowski (Westport, Conn., 1986), pp. 613 – 38. The developments traced in this paragraph are described in these two accounts. A more recent study based on intensive archival research briefly describes the genesis of the American Jewish movement for Soviet Jewry; see Yaakov Ro'i, *The Struggle for Soviet Jewish Emigration 1948 – 1967, Soviet and East European Studies* 75 (Cambridge and New York, 1991), pp. 193 – 212.

brace the cause of Soviet Jews. Within a year, in April 1964, 24 national organizations founded an umbrella agency, the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, to coordinate activities in behalf of those beleaguered Jews. The conference was housed, staffed, and supervised by NJCRAC, but never properly funded.<sup>207</sup> A few weeks later a second group was formed, representing grassroots activism and drawing upon the energy and militancy of youth, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ).<sup>208</sup>

In these early years of struggle, several conflicts developed that were to dog the movement for decades to come. One was the fear of the national organizations that they might lose control over their own creation, the American Conference, which, as yet another agency in the already overcrowded organizational world, might even compete with them for funding. Most significant, though, was the clash over strategy between the grassroots activists represented by the SSSJ and local community councils, on the one hand, and the national organizations, on the other. The grassroots groups, modeling themselves after the American civil-rights movement, urged a strategy of confrontation. They demanded the right of emigration for Soviet Jews ("Let My People Go," read their placards) and argued that, since "Jews could not 'negotiate' when they had nothing to offer in exchange," embarrassing public demonstrations were the movement's most potent weapon. The established organizations feared that mass demonstrations would unleash anarchy, discredit the movement, and provide a pretext for increased repression in the Soviet Union. They favored a more dignified, behind-the-scenes approach and preferred to set short-term goals, such as the amelioration of conditions in the Soviet Union, rather than the grandiose scheme of engineering a mass migration of Jews out of the Soviet Union. Moreover, since they operated without counterparts in the Soviet Union, they had no confidence that Jews would actually leave should the Communist government liberalize its emigration policies. They feared the entire movement would collapse under such circumstances.

Added to this volatile mix of conflicting strategies were demands issued

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<sup>207</sup>Both Orbach and Appelbaum emphasize the meager funding given to the American Conference. By contrast, the executive director of NJCRAC claimed, in a memo dated April 2, 1968, that his umbrella agency devoted 10 percent of its budget to the conference. (Memo from Albert Chernin to Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the Presidents Conference, in the Blaustein Library of the American Jewish Committee.) NJCRAC also played a major role in conveying the program plans of the American Conference to local community relations groups.

<sup>208</sup>For a good survey of activities during the 1960s, see two articles by Jerry Goodman, "American Response to Soviet Anti-Jewish Policies," *AJYB* 1965, vol. 66, pp. 312–19, and "American Response to Soviet Anti-Semitism," *AJYB* 1969, vol. 70, pp. 111–18. For an interesting analysis of the social composition of the SSSJ, see William Orbach, *The American Movement*, pp. 27–29.

by some Orthodox groups to desist from all public activism, since a program sponsored by the Lubavitch Hassidic movement already existed to ransom Soviet Jewry. On the other end of the spectrum, advocating even more extreme forms of confrontation, the Jewish Defense League in 1970 launched a program of harassment and violence directed at all Soviet personnel in the United States. Finally, the movement was severely hampered by a shortage of funds. The SSSJ functioned only because its two leaders, Jacob Birnbaum and Glenn Richter, worked for scant remuneration, and the American Conference had virtually no independent budget.<sup>209</sup>

Some of the organizational problems were resolved in the early 1970s with the formation of national bodies to coordinate and plan the activities of the Soviet Jewry movement. First, in 1970 the grassroots organizations formed a Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, which would open a Washington office and benefit from increased funding by its growing number of affiliates. One year later, the established organizations replaced the American Conference with a new agency named the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ). From its inception, the National Conference was institutionally interlocked with the established leadership of the organized community: its plenum included all members of the Presidents Conference as well as representatives of local federations and the Council of Jewish Federations.<sup>210</sup> Under the professional leadership of Jerry Goodman and a succession of well-connected volunteer chairpersons, the NCSJ became the central address for planning initiatives in behalf of Soviet Jewry. The subsequent history of the Soviet Jewry movement is largely the story of the complex interaction between the National Conference, which regarded itself as *the* representative organization of American Jewry working for Soviet Jewry, on the one hand, and the grassroots groups, such as the Union of Councils, the SSSJ, and the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry, on the other. Adding to the complexity of Jewish organizational efforts was the involvement of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, which exerted enormous behind-the-scenes pressure to control American Jewish activities.<sup>211</sup>

Periodically, the strains between these groups erupted in public. In the early 1970s a major battle was waged over the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, legislation aimed at linking American trade concessions to the Soviet Union's treatment of its Jews. Under severe pressure from President Rich-

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<sup>209</sup>Appelbaum, pp. 618–22.

<sup>210</sup>Abraham J. Bayer, "American Response to Soviet Anti-Semitism," *AJYB* 1973, vol. 74, p. 212.

<sup>211</sup>For a critical discussion of the role of the "Office Without a Name," headed by Nechemiah Levanon, see William W. Orbach, "Israel vs. Soviet Jewry," *Response*, no. 38, 1980, pp. 6–20.

ard Nixon, the Presidents Conference, which controlled the NCSJ, backed away from support of the bill only to find itself facing equally powerful demands from the grassroots groups to support the Jackson legislation.<sup>212</sup> By the mid-1970s, as emigration picked up, a new crisis developed over the movement's policy toward "dropouts" — Soviet Jews who emigrated with Israeli visas but opted for resettlement in other lands. (By 1979, this was the choice of two-thirds of the emigrants.) Three factors influenced the established organizations to call for an end to funding for the "dropouts." One was concern about the mounting costs of settling such dropouts in the United States. Another was the fear that the Soviets would close their gates when they realized that many emigrants were not seeking repatriation to Israel but a means of escape to the West. Last was powerful pressure from Israeli officials to cut off all funding to Soviet Jews not going to the Jewish state. Once again, many of the grassroots activists, though supportive of *aliyah*, argued for continuing aid to any Jew leaving the Soviet Union.<sup>213</sup>

Around the same time, with the easing of emigration from the USSR, pressure built to repeal the Jackson-Vanik bill, with established organizations like the American Jewish Congress urging trade concessions as a reward for the Soviets' looser emigration policies.<sup>214</sup> However, the activists of the Union of Councils and the SSSJ, at the urging of refuseniks in the Soviet Union, fought any attempt to diminish the pressure on the Soviets.

By the mid-1980s, the two major Soviet Jewry organizations were at loggerheads over most issues. The Union of Councils framed the cause of Soviet Jewry in terms of a fight against human-rights abuses. Accordingly, it denounced apartheid in South Africa and persecution in Ethiopia, along with the policies of the Soviets. The NCSJ expressed the views of the established organizations and the positions of the Israeli government and usually urged a less militant posture vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. This was in part because it regarded an improvement in Soviet-American relations as the best hope for a relaxation of emigration restrictions, and in part because Israel was seeking to improve its own relationship with the Soviet Union.

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<sup>212</sup>William Korey, "Rescuing Russian Jewry: Two Episodes Compared," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 5, no. 1, 1975, pp. 8–16.

<sup>213</sup>Orbach, *The American Movement*, pp. 75–76. See also Leonard Fein, "Let My People Go . . . Where?" *Moment*, Jan. 1977, pp. 10–12, and Bernard Postal, "How to Deal with Soviet 'Dropouts,'" *The Jewish Week-American Examiner* (New York), Oct. 31–Nov. 6, 1976, p. 30.

<sup>214</sup>Appelbaum, "The Soviet Jewry Movement," pp. 629–30. For a critique of the inflexibility displayed by Jewish organizations in this period, which, according to its author, "turned out to be disastrous," see Marshall I. Goldman, "Soviet-American Trade and Soviet Jewish Emigration: Should a Policy Change Be Made by the American Jewish Community?" in *Soviet Jewry in the 1980s: The Politics of Anti-Semitism, Emigration and the Dynamics of Resettlement*, ed. Robert O. Freedman (Durham and London, 1989), pp. 152–56.

Competition between these organizations did not help matters; both conducted regular briefings in Washington for members of Congress, often within days of one another. Further strains resulted from the imbalance in their organizational circumstances. The National Conference was composed of 43 member organizations, which collectively claimed to represent three million American Jews. This gave the NCSJ great clout and credibility, even as it necessitated a moderate, often tentative, approach to issues in order to forge a consensus among its many constituents. The Union of Councils in 1985 represented 37 local Soviet Jewry groups, claiming 50,000 members. But though it lacked a vast membership base, it could draw upon a highly committed and activist following.<sup>215</sup>

The two organizations clashed repeatedly in the later 1980s and early 1990s when emigration once again surged as the Communist regime toppled.<sup>216</sup> The Union of Councils — which resigned from the Presidents Conference in 1992 — continued to fight for the amelioration of living conditions for Jews and other persecuted groups in the Soviet Union, whereas the Presidents Conference and its sister organization, the National Conference, focused primarily on resettling Soviet Jews in Israel.<sup>217</sup> When the UJA-Federation structure threw vast financial resources into Operation Exodus, a program designed to help Israel absorb immigrants from the former Soviet Union, it set aside only minimal sums for those Jews who stayed put.<sup>218</sup> In 1992, for example, a mere \$10 million dollars was spent by the UJA on the latter, compared to \$150 million spent on Israeli absorption programs. Aid for Jews in the former Soviet Union increasingly came from private foundations and American Jewish religious groups eager to reach the large pool of Jews beginning to return to their Jewish roots.<sup>219</sup>

### *Jewish Survival in the United States: The Shift to Domestic Spending*

Support for Israel and the struggle to free Soviet Jewry were the great causes of the American Jewish community from the mid-1960s until the late

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<sup>215</sup>Arthur J. Magida, "Who Speaks for Soviet Jewry?" *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Jan. 18, 1985, p. 64ff.

<sup>216</sup>Walter Ruby, "Are American Jews Abandoning Soviet Jews?" *Washington Jewish Week*, June 22, 1989, pp. 8–9.

<sup>217</sup>Since the 1980s, leaders moved easily between the National Conference and the Presidents Conference. Morris B. Abram and Shoshana Cardin went from chairing one organization to chairing the other.

<sup>218</sup>The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee serves as the primary conduit of communal funding to Jews in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

<sup>219</sup>Vince Stehle, "An Emotional Debate over How to Help Russian Jews," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, Mar. 9, 1993, pp. 6–7. By 1993, a Jewish Funders Network represented 200 philanthropists and foundation heads that give money to aid Jews living in the former Soviet Union (p. 7).

1980s. By the early 1990s, a palpable shift in priorities had taken hold. To be sure, the stirring rescue of 45,000 black Jews from Ethiopia<sup>220</sup> and the *aliyah* of 600,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union spurred continuing large-scale funding for Israeli absorption programs. But other factors created a countervailing pressure.

Dissatisfaction with Israeli policies — beginning with the Lebanese incursion of 1982, the *intifada*, which erupted in 1987, and the Likud government's heavy spending on construction beyond the Green Line in Judea and Samaria — prompted some federation leaders to question their large allocations to Israel.<sup>221</sup> The flat, if not declining, levels of Jewish giving, particularly during years of recession, also necessitated a reappraisal. The crunch was particularly acute in the early 1990s, when vast sums were sent to Israel to fund Operation Exodus, even as federations slashed the budgets of local agencies and discharged personnel. For the fiscal year beginning July 1993, the New York UJA-Federation reduced its allocations to its agencies by an average of 7.9 percent; Boston's Combined Jewish Philanthropies cut its funding to its largest agencies by anywhere from 5 to 15 percent; the Cleveland federation instituted a 3-percent across-the-board cut of its member agencies; and the Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles was forced to cut its domestic allocations by \$3.5 million because 13 percent of its pledges had gone unpaid.<sup>222</sup>

Whereas alienation from Israeli government policies, the recession, and the huge drain on resources by Operation Exodus could be regarded as temporary setbacks, community leaders were forced to confront a longer-term crisis in the early 1990s — a crisis of Jewish demographic decline in America. With the publication of data from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey on spiraling rates of intermarriage and declining levels of Jewish identification on the part of younger Jews, the organized community took notice of a crisis of "Jewish continuity" in the United States.<sup>223</sup> Some argued that American Jews had so preoccupied — or distracted — themselves with international Jewish needs that they had neglected to care adequately for domestic communal life. In any event, the 1990s brought a heightened awareness of the urgent need to fund programs to assure the viability of Jewish life in the United States. Less certain was whether the

<sup>220</sup>See Steven Kaplan and Chaim Rosen, "Ethiopian Jews in Israel," *AJYB* 1994, vol. 94, pp. 62 – 66.

<sup>221</sup>Doron P. Levin, "Anguished Appeal: Jewish Charities Raise Huge Sums in U.S., But Resistance Grows," *Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 1, 1983, pp. 1, 14.

<sup>222</sup>Winston Pickett, "The Money Crunch," *Long Island Jewish World*, Oct. 15 – 21, 1993, p. 14.

<sup>223</sup>See Barry A. Kosmin et al., *Highlights of the CJF 1990 National Jewish Population Survey* (Council of Jewish Federations, New York, 1991). On the communal response, see, for example, Gary Rosenblatt, "Federations Confront Jewish Survival," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Nov. 20, 1992, p. 40ff.

community could simultaneously act upon this new resolve and also maintain its overseas commitments. Or would the organized community need to confront “a cruel choice between Israel’s future and American Jewry’s”? As Barry Shrage, director of the Boston federation, put it: “If we don’t do something to shore up the local community, it’s going to start to decline, and that is going to hurt Israel down the road.”<sup>224</sup>

The division of funds for domestic versus overseas needs illustrates the trajectory of communal priorities and needs over the past quarter century. In the years after the Six Day War, approximately 65 percent of money raised by federations went to the UJA, a figure that rose to 75 percent in 1974, after the Yom Kippur War. By 1980, the UJA share had declined to 57 percent, which included special funds for Project Renewal.<sup>225</sup> A decade later, UJA’s share declined to 42 percent — exclusive of the special campaigns for Project Renewal and Operation Exodus.<sup>226</sup> Jacob B. Ukeles, a leading consultant to Jewish communal organizations, predicted in 1993 that the downward trend of allocations for overseas needs would continue until it leveled off somewhere between 25 and 33 percent.<sup>227</sup> Given the volatility of the Middle East, it is difficult to anticipate overseas needs precisely, but there is little doubt that the organized Jewish community of the United States is increasingly preoccupied with its own severe problems. As historian Jonathan Sarna has observed: “Where for three decades the attention of the community had been focused on the dangers faced by Jews in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and on the question of whether ‘they’ would survive, today attention is being paid to the dangers Jews face within their own communities, and the wonder is whether ‘we’ will survive.”<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>224</sup>For some reflection on this retreat from aid for Israel, see J.J. Goldberg, “The Donors Bite Back,” and “Separated by a Common Cause,” *Jerusalem Report*, June 13, 1991, pp. 40–42, and Feb. 27, 1992, pp. 18–22. Shrage is quoted in the former article on p. 42.

<sup>225</sup>Marc Lee Raphael, *History of the United Jewish Appeal*, pp. 136–37.

<sup>226</sup>“Federation Allocations: Overseas, National and Local. 1990 and 1989 (With Comparisons to 1982). September 1991 (Preliminary)” (Council of Jewish Federations, New York), p. 2. This figure reflects the budgeting of 77 reporting federations. In general, smaller federations allocated *higher* sums for overseas needs than did the largest federations.

<sup>227</sup>“UJA Funds for Israel Could Drop to 25%,” *Jewish Post and Opinion*, Mar. 3, 1993, p. 1. Some federations have resisted the trend toward reduced allocations for overseas needs, including, most notably, the largest, New York’s UJA-Federation, which still sent 70 percent of its net proceeds abroad. Douglas Feiden, “Jewish Charities Turn to Priorities at Home,” *Forward*, Mar. 25, 1994, pp. 1, 4.

<sup>228</sup>Jonathan D. Sarna, “The Secret of Jewish Continuity,” *Commentary*, Oct. 1994, p. 55.

### *The Domestic Agenda: The Hegemony of Federations*

The most noteworthy development during the past quarter century on the domestic front has been the continuing success of local federations and their umbrella agency, the Council of Jewish Federations, in strengthening their grip on Jewish organizational life. In part, federations gained in power through their close alliance with the UJA, whose mission inspired Jews eager to aid coreligionists in Israel and distressed overseas communities. Through programs such as Project Renewal and countless missions to Israel, federation leaders involved themselves directly in overseas needs. Moreover, federations consolidated their power over domestic Jewish life by expanding the scope of their funding: few Jewish agencies are not beholden to federations for at least part of their funding. Through its National Funding Councils, which replaced the Large City Budgeting Conference in 1993, federations allocate funds to virtually all national religious and cultural institutions; local federation allocations now also include educational institutions as well as synagogue programs. Unlike the great divide of the postwar decades between “federation Jews” and “synagogue Jews,” a great many of the former are now also active in synagogue and cultural life.<sup>229</sup> On both the local and national levels, volunteer leaders move easily between their federations and other institutional commitments. Indeed, savvy volunteers know that they can best insure communal funding for their favorite project — a day school on the local level, or a community relations organization on the national level — by participating actively in the federation process.

Although much of this has evolved without prior planning, it now appears that federation leaders intend to reconstitute their central umbrella agency, the Council of Jewish Federations, as a governing body for the American Jewish community, much as individual federations play that role on the local level. According to one insider, “The CJF is becoming a collective body, where member-federations are prepared to tax themselves for the collective good.”<sup>230</sup> This approach was first activated when the CJF voted at its General Assembly in 1990 to assign each community a “fair share” responsibility for absorbing Russian immigrants in the United States. In a bold — some would say, audacious — next step, the CJF then developed a plan to guarantee \$900 million in bank loans to Israel for the

<sup>229</sup>For opposing views on the persistence of the gap between synagogue and federation Jews into the 1990s, see Steven M. Cohen, *Content or Continuity? Alternative Bases for Commitment* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1991), pp. 35 – 36, which talks of alternative types of attachment, and Renae Cohen and Sherry Rosen, *Organizational Affiliation of American Jews: A Research Report* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1992), p. 24, whose findings suggest that Jews no longer operate according to those earlier distinctions.

<sup>230</sup>J.J. Goldberg, “Who Speaks for the Jews?” *Jerusalem Report*, July 1, 1993, p. 29.

absorption of Soviet immigrants, with each federation asked to assume its "fair share" of the costs, even though they did not have money on hand should Israel default on the loans. A journalist covering the proceedings noted the historic nature of this decision: "For the first time ever, the American Jewish community had assembled as a voting body and elected to tax itself on a large scale. . . ." "This thing," added another observer in reference to the CJF, "is turning into a parliament."<sup>231</sup>

In 1992, the Council of Jewish Federations reshaped its governance structure to facilitate its reconstitution as "a parliament of member federations."<sup>232</sup> Both the newly constituted executive committee and the larger board were to be representative of the nearly 200 member federations:<sup>233</sup> the former would consist of 50 individuals drawn from small, medium, and large federations all over the country and Canada, whereas delegations on the board would reflect the size of each community and its campaign. Most important, the CJF was given the power to raise a binding levy from its constituents to fund national projects on a fair-share basis. The goal was nothing less than the transformation of the Council of Jewish Federations into "a national decision-making authority."<sup>234</sup>

The driving consideration behind these changes is the perceived need for a structure to cope with the domestic needs of Jews on a national, rather than only a local, basis. As Carl A. Sheingold, a leading CJF administrator, has put it:

It's become a mobile world. We have to look at the need for centralized decision-making, particularly as funds become more scarce, without going so far that we dilute local control and local connections to the community of givers. We've been able to handle this in relation to Soviet Jews on an ad hoc basis. But what about

<sup>231</sup>J.J. Goldberg, "Fundraisers Go for Broke," *Jerusalem Report*, May 2, 1991, pp. 22 – 23.

<sup>232</sup>Larry Yudelson, "CJF Approves Rules to Give New Powers to Central Body," *JTA Daily News Bulletin*, Nov. 18, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>233</sup>As of the early 1990s, there were 187 area-based Jewish federations in the United States and Canada. Madeleine Tress and Barry A. Kosmin, "Tradition and Transition in Jewish Women's Philanthropy," in Kosmin and Ritterband, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy*, p. 75.

<sup>234</sup>Yudelson, "CJF Approves Rules," p. 3. The CJF has also begun to rein in the activities of other umbrella organizations within its orbit. It presently houses the offices of the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), the national educational arm of federations, as well as the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. Further consolidation will come when NJCRAC moves to the offices of the CJF headquarters by March 1995 and the CJF intensifies its involvement in the governance of HIAS. (See "Change at CJF: It's Here, It's Coming," *Newsbriefs* [Council of Jewish Federations, New York, Aug. 1993], p. 1.) Most dramatically, the CJF commissioned a one-year study commencing in the spring of 1994 to rethink the relationship between the UJA and the federation movement, a process that will examine allocations procedures as well as means to streamline bureaucratic operations. Larry Yudelson, "CJF Flexes Its Muscle, Approves New Study," *Long Island Jewish World*, Apr. 22 – 28, 1994, pp. 3, 17.

such long-term issues as elderly Jews flocking to retirement communities in Florida? Is it up to Florida [federations] to provide needed services, or should New York, which is where the people came from, take part of the responsibility?<sup>235</sup>

Given the history of voluntarism in America, with its powerful centrifugal tendencies, it is likely that this push for a more unified Jewish community will evoke counterpressures. Political scientist Daniel Elazar has already noted such pressures: "As the federations have become more powerful, there is evidence that their share of the total Jewish fund-raising dollar has declined, as new people who did not find the federation establishments open to them or advancement through federation sufficiently rapid or far, seek other places to put voluntary contributions of time, effort, and funds."<sup>236</sup>

Along with the challenge of creating a viable structure for national Jewish governance, the federation world has reformulated its central mission. Founded primarily to raise funds for service agencies in local Jewish communities, federations have deliberately redefined their mission as "community building," a direct extension of shifts in the larger communal agenda. Donald Feldstein, a longtime federation and Jewish community center executive, astutely summarized the reasons for the shift:

Faced with the emerging welfare state to care for many basic needs, having largely "made it" on the American scene by the late 1960s, facing the breakup of the old liberal/labor/black/Jewish coalition, coming to grips in 1967 with the reality that the destruction of Israel was an intolerable possibility, the North American Jewish community made an about-face in the basic direction of its entire philanthropic endeavor. It shifted from a primary focus on helping American Jews integrate into American life successfully to a basic concern with maintaining and enhancing their Jewish life in the face of the "threat" of freedom in North America. The building and enhancement of community itself became the primary mission of the federation. . . . Federations became less federations of agencies and more federations of the entire community. Functions of synagogues and social agencies began to be blurred. . . . Funding shifted from the hard social services to community-building activities in Jewish education, in Jewish informal education, in college campus programs, community relations, etc. At the same time, the state picked up the tab on social services.<sup>237</sup>

In short, federations have redefined their mission to serve as agents of Jewish survival.

This seismic shift has been reflected in the funding priorities of local communities. During the past quarter century, federations have reallocated their domestic spending so that Jewish educational institutions receive the

<sup>235</sup>Ira Rifkin, "The GA: Feeling the Crunch," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Nov. 15, 1991, p. 68.

<sup>236</sup>Elazar, "Developments in Jewish Community Organization," p. 175.

<sup>237</sup>Donald Feldstein, "The Changing Client System of Jewish Federations," in Kosmin and Ritterband, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy*, pp. 220–21.

largest percentage of funds (25.4 percent), followed by Family and Related Services (18.8 percent), Refugee Services (12.5 percent), and Care for the Aged (9.3 percent). The JCC share declined to 20 percent; it had been 5 percent higher in the sixties. Health and hospitals sank to under 5 percent of expenditures, religious programs received the smallest share, 1.3 percent, but they had been virtually unfunded by federations in the midcentury period.<sup>238</sup>

Faced with the prospect of declining revenues (see below), the budgeting process must increasingly contend with rival ideological points of view and conflicting needs. The "Jewish continuity" push has encouraged some to demand that highest priority and even more funds be given to Jewish schools, youth programs, summer camps, and synagogues. Simultaneously, an aging Jewish population needs housing and other facilities for its older members. Family services must provide services to immigrants and cope with the consequences of high divorce rates and other symptoms of social dislocation. And with the vast increase in intermarriage, pressures have built to invest communal funds in programs designed to reach out to interfaith families in the hope of winning them back to the Jewish community. These kinds of conflicting Jewish needs will test the mettle of the federation world in new ways, precisely because many of the issues are ideological and do not lend themselves to the consensus-building style of federation decision-making.

### *The Community Relations Sphere*

Perhaps no area of Jewish organizational activity on the domestic front has been more radically transformed in the past quarter century than the community relations sphere, in response to shifting, often contradictory, trends. By virtually any measure, domestic anti-Semitism has declined sharply; however, many American Jews continue to believe that *other* Jews in the United States are targets of bigotry.<sup>239</sup> Moreover, even as Jews as a whole continue their ascent of the American socioeconomic ladder, achieving financial success and reaching positions of influence, they have become targets of small hate groups whose demagogic leaders express a politics of

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<sup>238</sup>"Federation Allocations. . . . September 1991 (Preliminary)." One additional category, Employment and Vocational Services, received 5.2 percent of allocations. It should be noted that these figures represent the spending of the 15 largest Jewish federations. In the smaller communities, Jewish hospitals were virtually nonexistent, but JCC funding accounted for as much as 38 percent of the domestic outlay. Spending on Jewish education ranged from 19 to 29 percent.

<sup>239</sup>See Gary A. Tobin and Sharon L. Sassler, *Jewish Perceptions of Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1988), and Tom W. Smith, *Anti-Semitism in Contemporary America* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1994).

resentment in which Jews are central villains. All this has occurred against a backdrop of periodic violence against Jews in Israel and other Diaspora lands and a resurgent right in Europe and the former USSR, which many Jews experience as a frightening reminder of the Nazi era.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles is predicated on an acute understanding of the uses of the Holocaust. Founded in 1977 as an educational program of Yeshiva University's West Coast campus, the Wiesenthal Center used a campaign of mass mailings aimed at evoking fears of a new Holocaust to build itself into a mass organization. By the early 1990s, the center boasted a staff of 100, a budget of \$12 million, and several hundred thousand contributors, who do not serve as a consulted body on policy matters.<sup>240</sup> Its main activities are the operation of a Holocaust museum and the unearthing of Nazi war criminals and perceived anti-Semites.<sup>241</sup> As Rabbi Marvin Hier, the founding executive of the Wiesenthal Center has observed about his growing empire:

We've moved far beyond the Holocaust. We've become a full-fledged Jewish defense agency. We're a social-action agency, a human rights organization. We respond quickly, whenever and wherever anti-Semitism appears. In fact, we've become one of the largest Jewish membership organizations in the country — some 380,000 families make regular contributions to it. This support gives us independence.<sup>242</sup>

According to one credible observer, the Simon Wiesenthal Center has become a "major direct mail fund-raising enterprise by outflanking even the ADL in the hunt for anti-Semitic threats to Jewish security. It is (sadly) not uncommon today to see organizations jockeying for position in a contest to determine who among them is 'toughest' in fighting anti-Semitism that is waged in the Jewish press and barrages of direct mail appeals."<sup>243</sup>

The Wiesenthal Center is not alone in highlighting the Holocaust. Since the early 1970s, approximately 90 Holocaust resource centers have sprouted around the country, playing a role in educating the wider public about one aspect of the Jewish experience — the destruction of European Jewry — and coordinating remembrance observances within the Jewish community. The largest of these is the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum on the Mall in Washington, D.C. With a staff of 175, a visitor total in the millions, and an official relationship with the American government, this national memorial has also assumed a role in the community relations field.<sup>244</sup> Quite

<sup>240</sup>Goldberg, "Who Speaks for the Jews?" p. 30.

<sup>241</sup>Ibid.

<sup>242</sup>Quoted in Judith Miller, *One, By One, By One: Facing the Holocaust* (New York, 1990), pp. 237 – 38.

<sup>243</sup>Jonathan Woocher, "The Geo-Politics of the American Jewish Community," *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints*, Jan. 15, 1992 (Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs), p. 3.

<sup>244</sup>On some of the highly politicized developments leading to the construction of the mu-

remarkably, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, which created and raised funds for the museum, has drained hundreds of millions of dollars from the communal coffer and speaks in behalf of American Jews — even though it has no formal relationship to the organized community and is not under the oversight of any central planning body. By contrast, most local Holocaust resource centers are funded by community relations councils or federations. Mainly founded in the decade 1975 – 1985 and housed either at universities or federation headquarters, Holocaust resource centers have served as an embodiment of American Jewry's preoccupation with survival and as an instrument for communicating with their non-Jewish neighbors about the evils of anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice.<sup>245</sup>

The latter task is primarily shouldered by three national agencies with a long history of defense work. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), founded as a commission of the B'nai B'rith in 1913, has worked for decades to confront defamation and prejudice, monitor anti-Semitic incidents, and educate the American public about Jews and Judaism. Although it claimed the entire B'nai B'rith membership as its own, ADL operated out of offices in New York, rather than Washington, the home base of its parent organization. By the late 1980s, the ADL no longer received any funding from the B'nai B'rith,<sup>246</sup> and by the 1990s, the ADL was only nominally attached to its parent organization. As of 1992, it claimed a budget of \$34.5 million, a staff of 350, and 30 regional offices.<sup>247</sup> Much of its success derived from its shift to the right in the 1980s; it became far more aggressive in monitoring hate groups and more militant in its pursuit of foes, staking out a "right-of-center" position on matters of Jewish defense.<sup>248</sup> Through this repositioning, the ADL garnered considerable communal support, even as its activities and pronouncements evoked spirited criticism.<sup>249</sup>

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seum, see Miller, *One, By One, By One*, pp. 251 – 66; on the actual structure, see James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, 1993), pp. 335 – 47. The latter work also analyzes a number of local memorials (see chaps. 11 – 12).

<sup>245</sup>For a reference work listing each of these groups and its scope of activities, see William L. Shulman, ed., *Directory: Association of Holocaust Organizations* (Holocaust Resource Center, Bayside, N.Y., and Queensborough Community College, 1994).

<sup>246</sup>David Makovsky, "B'nai B'rith on the Brink," *Moment*, Jan./Feb. 1989, p. 34. See also James David Besser, "Family Feud? ADL Dropping 'B'nai B'rith' Label in Its Communications," *Jewish Week* (New York), Feb. 2, 1990, p. 5.

<sup>247</sup>Data for 1992 based on "LCBC Reports/Budget Digest on 18 National Agencies, March 1993" (Council of Jewish Federations, New York, Mar. 1993).

<sup>248</sup>Goldberg, "Who Speaks for the Jews?" p. 30.

<sup>249</sup>The ADL's monitoring activities came under embarrassing scrutiny in 1993 when the organization's San Francisco offices were raided by police looking for evidence of illegal spying on American citizens. Before the matter was dropped by the San Francisco District Attorney in November 1993, all the major Jewish umbrella organizations rallied to defend the ADL. See Jeffrey Goldberg, "Police Raid on ADL Fuels 'Spy Scandal,'" *Forward*, Apr. 16, 1993, p. 1; Larry Yudelson, "Jewish Groups Close Ranks in Support of Embattled ADL," *JTA Daily*

The American Jewish Congress has continued to maintain its position on the left of the political spectrum. It specializes in "militant advocacy of church-state separation, litigates for civil rights, women's rights, [and] is active in Middle East Affairs."<sup>250</sup> It came under criticism for its open challenge of Israeli policies, when it issued a report in 1987 that described "the status quo as untenable" and claimed that Israel was sitting on "a demographic time bomb."<sup>251</sup> Following that, Congress officials ardently advocated a "land for peace" agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbors and met with Palestinians at a time when the American Jewish community and Israel refused to enter into such dialogue. On domestic issues, the Congress has maintained a liberal stance to the left of much of the Jewish community, a factor that may account for its continuing decline in membership and budget.<sup>252</sup>

The middle of the spectrum is occupied by the American Jewish Committee, the oldest of the so-called defense agencies. Committee staff members are at great pains to emphasize their organization's centrism. "AJC[ommittee] is a coalition," according to Hyman Bookbinder, its former Washington representative. "It has hawks and doves, Republicans and Democrats." Under the professional leadership of David A. Harris, the AJCommittee has defined itself as "consummately centrist."<sup>253</sup> A key element of its activity is to function "as a kind of roving American Jewish ambassador, cultivating contacts with European, Pacific-rim and Latin-American governments." Domestically, the Committee has long maintained strong interfaith and intergroup-relations programs. It also specializes in sponsoring sociological research on the Jewish community and the condition of the Jewish family and public opinion surveys on anti-Semitism and other matters pertaining

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*News Bulletin*, Apr. 28, 1993, p. 4; and "Inquiry Is Dropped over Spy Charges," *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 1993, p. 25.

In the summer of 1994, the ADL issued a booklet that accused the Christian right of anti-Semitism: *The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance and Pluralism* (Anti-Defamation League, New York, 1994). For a flavor of the ensuing controversy, see Michael Ledeen, "They're Pro-Israel, Pro-Family, Pro-Religion. So Why Do We Treat Them Like Enemies?" and David Saperstein, "With Friends Like These, We Don't Need Enemies," *Moment*, Oct. 1994, p. 45ff.

<sup>250</sup>Goldberg, "Who Speaks for the Jews?" p. 30.

<sup>251</sup>Jonathan Mark, "Coming Home: Lifton Takes Reins at the AJCongress," *Long Island Jewish World*, Mar. 25 - 31, 1988, pp. 10 - 11.

<sup>252</sup>Although it has long claimed a membership of 50,000, a more recent estimate put the AJCongress membership at 35,000, with a staff of 40 and a budget of \$7 million. Goldberg, "Who Speaks for the Jews?" p. 30.

<sup>253</sup>Bookbinder and Harris are quoted in "AJCommittee Rebounds from Fiscal Pounding," *Forward*, May 15, 1992, pp. 1, 14. For an analysis of the repositioning of the Committee during the 1980s, see Richard David Zelin, *Ethnic and Religious Group Politics in the United States: The Case of the American Jewish Committee, 1982 - 1987* (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Wisconsin, 1992).

to Jews. As part of a major restructuring in 1990, it ceased publishing *Present Tense*, a liberal Jewish journal; *Commentary*, its older publication, is largely funded by outside money from conservative sources.<sup>254</sup> The Committee, which also publishes the *American Jewish Year Book*, has 32 chapters nationwide, approximately 225 staff members, a claimed membership of 40,000,<sup>255</sup> and a budget of some \$17 – 18 million.<sup>256</sup>

With the major organizations implanted on the left, right, and center of the political spectrum, building consensus has become increasingly difficult, even more so as new groups have emerged that seek nothing less than to redirect the organized Jewish community's approach to public policy questions. In the late 1980s, a leading Orthodox organization, Agudath Israel, established an office in Washington to challenge the liberal political stance of most Jewish organizations and lobby for causes dear to its constituents.<sup>257</sup> Building on the model of the Reform movement's Religious Action Center, this office is positioned close to the American power elite in Washington. The lobbying of Agudath Israel is driven by a resentment of the established organizations, which it classifies as "secular" and uninformed by traditional Jewish perspectives. Moreover, it differs sharply with these groups over what is in the best interest of Jews, particularly on church-state questions. The Orthodox group favors government aid to parochial schools and day-care programs under religious auspices or a voucher system that will defray some of the costs of tuition. A second organization, the centrist Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, has "deplore[d] the wooden application of contrived notions of First Amendment principles to deny generally available public benefits to certain students and their parents only because they choose secular education in a non-public school setting." More broadly, both groups consider it unwise and un-Jewish to banish religion from the public square.<sup>258</sup>

A different challenge to the public policy stance of the established community emanated from the left of the political spectrum in the form of an organization named the New Jewish Agenda. Founded in May 1979 — approximately one year after the demise of Breira — by "disaffected mem-

<sup>254</sup>Andrew Silow Carroll, "'Perestroika' at AJCommittee," *Washington Jewish Week*, Feb. 15, 1990, pp. 17 – 18.

<sup>255</sup>Goldberg, "Who Speaks for the Jews?" p. 30.

<sup>256</sup>Periodically, the Committee and Congress have seriously planned to merge, but negotiations have always foundered on the clash of institutional cultures. See, for example, "AJCommittee, AJCongress Officials Say Talks Held to Coordinate But Merger Not in Offing," *JTA Daily News Bulletin*, May 30, 1974, p. 4; Marvin Schick, "In the City," *Jewish Press*, June 13, 1975, p. 2; and "AJC's Break Off Engagement," *Forward*, May 14, 1993, p. 1.

<sup>257</sup>David Friedman, "Agudath Israel Opens D.C. Office to Help Lobby Congress," *JTA Daily News Bulletin*, Sept. 21, 1988, p. 4.

<sup>258</sup>Evan Gahr, "Orthodox Jews Get Political," *Insight*, Jan. 27, 1992, p. 14ff.

bers of Jewish organizations, refugees from the non-Jewish left, and former members of Breira,"<sup>259</sup> the New Jewish Agenda incorporated the vocabulary and rituals of Judaism as well as those of the political left. In its statement of purpose, Agenda (as it was called by insiders) endorsed a broad-ranging program:

We are Jews concerned with the retreat from social action concerns and openness to discussion within the organized Jewish community. As Jews who believe strongly that authentic Jewish life must involve serious and consistent attention to the just ordering of human society and the natural resources of our world (*tikun olam*), we seek to apply Jewish values to such questions as economic justice, ecological concerns, energy policy, world hunger, intergroup relations and affirmative action, women's rights, peace in the Middle East, and Jewish education.<sup>260</sup>

In promoting this program, Agenda activists harked back to "the old agenda of American Jews: Jews used to be concerned with social issues and justice." In the last 20 years, "the Jewish community has become extremely self-oriented. The more self-oriented it has become, the more self-defeating it has become."<sup>261</sup> The goal was to reorient the Jewish community and set it back on its former course.

In November 1982, Agenda issued a detailed platform outlining the specific ways in which this would be accomplished. It called "for the transformation of Jewish institutions and the creation of new ones to represent the whole spectrum of views of U.S. Jewry."<sup>262</sup> According to Agenda's most visible leader, Rabbi Gerold Serotta, the organization's goal was to serve as "a loyal opposition in the Jewish community."<sup>263</sup>

Agenda evoked much the same response from more conservative Jews as did Breira. Rael Jean Isaac, for example, weighed in once again with a scathing pamphlet, this one entitled "The New/Anti Jewish Agenda," in which she once again traced the pedigree and dangerous fellow travelers of a left-wing Jewish group.<sup>264</sup> Despite the attacks in the Jewish press, Agenda did not suffer the fate of Breira. Members were not as besieged as their Breira

<sup>259</sup>On the founding of the New Jewish Agenda and its first national conference, see Ellen Willis, "Radical Jews Caught in the Middle," *Village Voice*, Feb. 4 - 10, 1981, p. 1ff.

<sup>260</sup>Quoted by Hillel Schenker, "The New Jewish Agenda," *New Outlook*, Nov. - Dec. 1980, p. 49.

<sup>261</sup>Arthur J. Magida, "Radical Gadflies," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Aug. 3, 1984, p. 34.

<sup>262</sup>"New Jewish Agenda National Platform," pp. 1 - 2; in the Blaustein Library of the American Jewish Committee.

<sup>263</sup>Rael Jean Isaac, "New Jewish Agenda — Outside the Consensus," *Midstream*, Dec. 1990, p. 19. Arguing that all Jews are responsible for one another, Agenda also offered specific "principles of peace" in the Middle East. It called for mutual recognition by Israel, the Arab states, and the PLO. It urged a cessation of Jewish settlement activities in the West Bank and Gaza (*ibid.*, p. 6).

<sup>264</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

predecessors had been; their jobs apparently were not on the line; they were not roundly attacked or ostracized as had been Breira activists. Agenda in fact scored some impressive victories, its chapters gaining admission to the local Jewish council or Jewish federation in Kansas City, New Haven, Ann Arbor, and Santa Fe. In July 1984, the Los Angeles chapter of Agenda was voted into the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles, thereby scoring a coup in Agenda's struggle for communal legitimation.<sup>265</sup>

When it folded its operations in 1992, because of financial insolvency,<sup>266</sup> the New Jewish Agenda could point to a record of legitimation by the umbrella organizations of local communities far beyond anything achieved by Breira. This was, undoubtedly, due in part to American Jewry's greater receptivity to Agenda's views on the Middle East. But it also reflected Agenda's willingness, unlike Breira, to balance its self-declared role as the "alternative" to the "established" Jewish community with a deliberate program of seeking inclusion within that very establishment.<sup>267</sup> For example, it formed a task force to involve itself in the Soviet Jewry movement,<sup>268</sup> and, at the request of the Reform movement, worked behind the scenes to keep the issue of the Middle East off the agenda of a major civil-rights march on Washington in 1983.<sup>269</sup> Also, it participated in elections for U.S. delegates to the World Zionist Congress by joining forces with Americans for a Progressive Israel and Israel's Citizens Rights party.<sup>270</sup> The latter effort further enhanced Agenda's status as a Zionist group.

The conflicting approaches advocated by Orthodox policy groups, the New Jewish Agenda, and diverse national agencies<sup>271</sup> mirror the absence of consensus in the Jewish community over priorities and how best to pursue Jewish interests. As the struggle for equality and civil rights has shifted from the individual to the group, and as groups vie for their rightful "piece of the pie" through "affirmative action," changes in the electoral system,

<sup>265</sup> *JTA Daily News Bulletin*, July 24, 1984, p. 2.

<sup>266</sup> On the reasons behind the folding of the New Jewish Agenda, see Larry Yudelson, "Peace Now Gets New Leader as New Jewish Agenda Folds," *JTA Daily News Bulletin*, Oct. 13, 1993, p. 3.

<sup>267</sup> Kevin Freeman, "New Jewish Agenda to Seek Communal Status," *JTA Daily News Bulletin*, June 29, 1983, p. 2.

<sup>268</sup> J.J. Goldberg, "The Graying of New Jewish Agenda," *Jewish Week* (New York), Aug. 21, 1987, p. 25.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>270</sup> Isaac, "New Jewish Agenda — Outside the Consensus," p. 18.

<sup>271</sup> Still another layer of public policy discussion has been added in recent years with the sponsorship of Jewish "think tank" activities by major foundations, such as the Montreal-based CRB Foundation, the Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation, and the Avi Chai Foundation. The Wilstein Institute (originally housed at the University of Judaism and now based at the Boston Hebrew College) also functions as a sponsor of Jewish public policy research.

and the courts, Jewish community relations work has become far more complex.<sup>272</sup> The field has been hard-pressed to strike a balance between promoting the rights of others while maintaining a vigilant concern for the particular needs of Jews.

### *The Communal Welfare Sphere*

The health and welfare programs of the American Jewish community have also undergone significant transformation in the past quarter century. Some older institutions have been phased out entirely. Jewish hospitals, for example, have been among the biggest losers of communal funding. Whereas 44 Jewish-sponsored hospitals existed in the 1960s, by the closing decade of the century only 22 remained, and many of these were on the verge of merging with non-Jewish institutions. Hospitals simply were too costly to maintain and were no longer deemed necessary in an age of reduced anti-Semitism and Jewish geographic dispersal.<sup>273</sup> By contrast, other, older agencies that had fallen on hard times in the midcentury decades received a new lease on life. Chief among these were immigrant aid programs, which became moribund after the settlement of Holocaust refugees in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and which rebounded with the influx of Soviet immigrants. Dissatisfaction with the existing structure of welfare institutions also prompted the creation of new types of agencies.

The arrival of some 280,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union served as a catalyst for the transformation of the welfare field. These new Americans needed to be transported from the Soviet Union, dispersed throughout the country, and helped with resettlement. The Jewish community provided them with housing, food, and clothing; it offered job placement assistance and vocational retraining for adults and a Jewish education for children. The primary agencies in this resettlement process were the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and local federations and family service agencies. HIAS saw its income soar. During the peak years of Jewish immigration to the United States from the Soviet Union, the U.S. Congress channeled over \$100 million to HIAS and local federations engaged in assisting refugees.<sup>274</sup> The former coordinated the movement of these Jews

<sup>272</sup>See Earl Raab's penetrating analysis of the challenge: "The End of Jewish Communal Relations?" *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Winter 1977, pp. 107 – 15.

<sup>273</sup>For a more detailed analysis, see David A. Gee and Alan Weinstein, "Why Jewish Hospitals Are Disappearing," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Winter/Summer 1993, pp. 94 – 98.

<sup>274</sup>Howard M. Sachar, *A History of the Jews in the United States* (New York, 1992), p. 930. See Sachar's extended discussion of "Operation Passage to Freedom," a program that brought tens of thousands of Jews to the U.S. rather than Israel during the late 1980s. This program prompted much recrimination in the American Jewish community and evoked bitter criticism

to the United States along with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee; it centralized policy decisions and set program standards for local agencies to follow in managing the day-to-day needs of the immigrants. On the local level, family service agencies provided counseling and financial aid; the Jewish vocational service offered job placement and retraining; and JCCs and Ys offered educational and social programs for the new immigrants, as did bureaus of Jewish education.<sup>275</sup> (The New York Association for New Americans handled resettlement needs for the largest Jewish community.)

Even as the immigrant aid groups rebounded, other service agencies struggled to survive. Most noteworthy was the precipitous decline of the B'nai B'rith, a fraternal and service organization dating to 1843. During the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, B'nai B'rith membership dropped by a third, from 200,000 to 136,000. Those who remained were primarily the elderly. Fewer than half the lodges met with any regularity or elected officers, and the organization was spending beyond its means. The organization's condition was not improved by the unfocused nature of its mission. Unlike more successful Jewish organizations that have a well-defined profile, B'nai B'rith has struggled to embrace a wide range of programs and causes. It has sought to remain true to its fraternal roots while simultaneously appealing to younger Jews seeking a more politically engaged organizational involvement. It has maintained its commitment to service through an ambitious program for housing the elderly, a Hillel campus network, and a youth wing, the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization; but it has also attempted to enhance its visibility in the community by issuing pronouncements on matters pertaining to anti-Semitism and Israel, a task usually reserved for community relations organizations. As it has floundered without a coherent mission, it has watched much of its empire disintegrate — the ADL has departed, Hillel is virtually autonomous,<sup>276</sup> B'nai B'rith Women became an independent organization, and even local chapters go their own way. The organization has struggled in recent years to right its capsizing ship.<sup>277</sup>

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from the Israeli government (pp. 925 – 33). See also Steven J. Gold, "Soviet Jews in the United States," *AJYB* 1994, vol. 94, pp. 3 – 57.

<sup>275</sup>Gold, pp. 10 – 13.

<sup>276</sup>When B'nai B'rith slashed its allocations to Hillel by 50 percent in the early 1990s, the latter reconstituted itself as Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life. The new entity will derive the overwhelming amount of its funding from private fund-raising and local federation support. See Larry Yudelson, "Federations Cram for Continuity on Campus: CJF's Regional Funding for Independent Hillel," *Long Island Jewish World*, Dec. 23 – 29, 1994, p. 3ff.

<sup>277</sup>Makovsky, "B'nai B'rith on the Brink," pp. 28 – 50; Mimsi Kromer Milton, "Can the Nation's Oldest Jewish Organization Survive," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Jan. 3, 1986, pp. 50 –

In some critical ways, several new Jewish philanthropies founded in the past two decades serve as a mirror image of the B'nai B'rith, even as they exemplify new attitudes and trends. In the words of one observer, they are "characterized by internal structures that are participatory, informal, small, and internally democratic, and a public posture that is 'liberal' or 'progressive.'"<sup>278</sup> Most notably, they attract the support of young Jews, many often nurtured by the *havurah* movement, many of them concerned with such issues as women's rights, nuclear disarmament, civil liberties, and Israeli-Palestinian relations. Supporters of these new groups tend to be highly critical of established agencies, alienated by "their (understandable) reliance on and obeisance to major donors; their emphasis on (necessary) organizational maintenance and (valuable) community welfare agencies rather than social change; their sheer size, leading to formality, rigidity, slowness, alleged secrecy, etc."<sup>279</sup>

For the most part, these groups are philanthropies rather than direct-service agencies. Two of these address domestic needs: the Jewish Fund for Justice provides grants to the non-Jewish poor, including African Americans living in urban slums, Navajos residing on reservations in Arizona, and Mexican-Americans working as migrant laborers.<sup>280</sup> Founded in 1984, the fund had awarded over \$1 million to 162 grassroots groups by the early 1990s.<sup>281</sup> Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger was founded in 1985 by Leonard Fein, the former editor of *Moment* magazine and a Jewish activist. Fein called upon Jews to donate 3 percent of the amounts they spend on bar mitzvahs, weddings, and other "affairs" to feed the hungry. Most of Mazon's grants are directed outside of the Jewish community, particularly to feed the homeless; its recipients have included the Prairie Fire Rural Action in Iowa, Mother Waddles Perpetual Mission in Detroit, and the

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55; Jon Greene, "B'nai B'rith Back from the Brink," *Washington Jewish Week*, Oct. 19, 1989, pp. 17–19; "B'nai B'rith Struggling for Survival," *Forward*, Sept. 4, 1992, p. 1; and "B'nai B'rith Redefines Itself," *Jewish Week* (New York), Sept. 18–24, 1992, p. 50. It did not help matters that the organization has engaged in bitter internal battles over the membership status of its women's division and the status of non-Jewish spouses. See Ari L. Goldman, "B'nai B'rith Is Threatening to Expel Its Women's Unit," *New York Times*, Dec. 7, 1989, p. A26; "Agreement Reached with BBW," *Jewish Monthly*, Oct. 1990, p. 7; Alan H. Feiler, "'An Act of Desperation?'" *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Aug. 7, 1992, p. 29; and James D. Besser, "Soul Searching on the Eve of Elections: Can B'nai B'rith, to Remain Competitive, Leave Its Fraternal Roots Without Losing Its Essence?" *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Aug. 19, 1994, pp. 48–49.

<sup>278</sup>Ira Silverman, "The New Jewish Philanthropies," in Kosmin and Ritterband, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy*, p. 205.

<sup>279</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>280</sup>Kathleen Teltsch, "New Jewish Philanthropy Aiming at Non-Sectarian Aid for All Poor," *New York Times*, Aug. 13, 1985, p. A13; Robert Neuwirth, "One Success Story," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Dec. 25, 1992, p. 41.

<sup>281</sup>Advertisement in *Tikkun*, Nov.–Dec. 1991, p. 47.

Westside Food Bank in Santa Monica. Some Mazon funding also aids Jewish projects, such as the Jewish Family Services in San Diego and the Institute for the Advancement of Education in Jaffa.<sup>282</sup>

The American Jewish World Service (AJWS) offers relief to grassroots organizations around the world, especially in remote areas. It aids victims of natural catastrophes, such as earthquakes and famine, and manmade suffering caused by wars. AJWS has provided medical supplies to famine-struck Mozambique, supplied seed crops for farmers in the Philippines, and built a children's village in Mexico City after an earthquake. Its promotional material emphasizes the role Jews need to play in the world at large: "Jews Don't Only Help Jews," reads one of its advertisements.<sup>283</sup> The New Israel Fund, as we have noted, provides grants for projects in Israel.

According to one estimate, these new Jewish philanthropies raise money from a donor base of approximately 20,000 American Jews, many of whom feel the established organizations "pay insufficient attention (and give insufficient money) to universal causes, favoring only Jewish recipients; or conversely, that they support 'Jewish' hospitals and social service agencies that really have little or no Jewish content, and fewer Jewish clients. . . ."<sup>284</sup> The new Jewish philanthropies provide such givers with targeted opportunities for giving to causes consistent with their own ideological commitments.

### *The Religious and Cultural Spheres*

Growing concerns about "Jewish continuity" in America have prompted new levels of communal support for religious and cultural institutions whose task is the strengthening of Jewish identity. The shift in thinking can be dated to the student protests held at the General Assemblies of the CJF in the late 1960s, when demands were issued to reorder communal priorities in favor of Jewish education. In the ensuing years, federation planning committees have increasingly recognized their responsibility to nurture Jewish commitment. As one federation volunteer put it: "If you're going to have Jewish givers, you've got to have Jews; and if you're going to have Jews, you've got to shift some of the money."<sup>285</sup>

Although most religious, educational, and cultural institutions are funded primarily through membership or tuition fees, plus funds raised

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<sup>282</sup>James D. Besser and Ron Ostroff, "The New Jewish Charities — Change in Direction," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, May 11, 1990, p. 62; Letty Cottin Pogrebin, "Food for Thought — and People," *Long Island Jewish World*, Nov. 18 – 24, 1994, p. 12; Ira Silverman, "New Jewish Philanthropies," pp. 210 – 11.

<sup>283</sup>Besser and Ostroff, "New Jewish Charities," p. 63.

<sup>284</sup>Silverman, "New Jewish Philanthropies," pp. 207, 213.

<sup>285</sup>Douglas Feiden, "Jewish Charities Turn to Priorities at Home," p. 4.

from private donors, federation money is increasingly supplementing these sources of revenue. Among the recipients of federations are day schools, summer camp programs, Jewish studies programs on campuses, and study programs in Israel catering to young people. The federation movement is now poised to double its financial support of Hillel campus activities.<sup>286</sup> Communal funds are now helping to support cultural institutions such as Jewish museums and, as noted above, Holocaust memorials. On a national level, the CJF funds coordinating bodies such as the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), which works with local boards of Jewish education and currently takes responsibility for federation discussions of "Jewish continuity." Federation funds also help support the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, which encourages the growth of Jewish artistic, theatrical, cinematic, and dance groups, and coordinates Jewish libraries, museums, and other cultural institutions. In recent years, the federation movement has turned to CLAL, the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, to teach its leaders about Jewish civilization.

Federations are beginning to reassess their relationship with synagogues. While they have long known that synagogues are critical staging points for UJA-Federation fund-raising campaigns, in recent years they have increasingly recognized the vital role played by synagogues in the transmission of Jewish values and identity.<sup>287</sup> As the organized community has become preoccupied with means to shore up Jewish family life and Jewish identity, federations have come to value the role synagogues can play. The Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston has launched one of the more innovative initiatives in this area: first, it has made possible family education programs at Reform and Conservative synagogues and day schools by financing the training costs of family educators and paying half their salaries. Next, it has financed pilot projects to develop the Jewish literacy of adults. A contemplated third stage would underwrite the costs of hiring a full-time professional at every synagogue to work with youth.<sup>288</sup>

What is most noteworthy about these programs is the willingness of federations to work in partnership with synagogues and invest communal funds in synagogue-run programs. Still, the process of forging such coopera-

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<sup>286</sup>Yudelson, "Turning Inward," p. 28. In order to create national oversight on campus matters and a "fair share" system of contributions to campus organizations, the CJF is planning a major new program to coordinate and expand funding for Hillel groups. Prior to the implementation of such a program, huge variations existed in the subsidies offered by local federations for campus work, ranging from no allocations to more than 7 percent of campaign revenues. On the new plan, see Yudelson, "Federations Cram for Jewish Continuity," p. 3.

<sup>287</sup>See the remarks of Barry Shrage to the board of trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, May 16, 1992, p. 3. Typescript in the Blaustein Library of the American Jewish Committee.

<sup>288</sup>Yosef I. Abramowitz, "Boston's Bold Experiment," *Reform Judaism*, Winter 1994, p. 76.

tive ventures is mined with potentially explosive obstacles, particularly because the cultures of the two types of institutions — the federation and the synagogue — differ so greatly. There is also a question of parity: if religious programs are to receive support, which are most worthy and how evenly should money be distributed among the programs of each movement? Moreover, how can the federation, which represents the total community, speak to the synagogue world at a time when the congregations themselves, representing different religious movements, have increasing difficulty finding ground for discourse?<sup>289</sup>

Ironically, a former nemesis of the synagogue has become a valuable bridge between the federation and synagogue worlds. Jewish community centers have invested heavily in outreach programs designed to bring Jews back to Jewish life — and especially into the synagogue. Although they have long sponsored programs for otherwise unaffiliated Jews — singles, interfaith families, and others on the periphery — a major reorientation in JCC goals was formally initiated in 1986. Under the leadership of Morton Mandel and Lester Pollack, two prominent communal leaders who headed a blue-ribbon commission on Jewish education within the JCC ambience, the Jewish Welfare Board (since renamed the Jewish Community Centers Association of North America, JCC Association for short)<sup>290</sup> directed its member institutions to intensify their programs for Jewish education.

The message of the new directive was unambiguous: “The days when JCCs were primarily institutions of recreational activities with relatively incidental Jewish education qua Jewish education is no longer sufficient to meet the changing needs of today’s Jewish communities in a world marked increasingly by computerization of the human condition and the trivialization of the Jewish ethos. The old type of JCC is obsolete and an albatross around the neck of the Jewish community.”<sup>291</sup> Since the initiative was undertaken, led by a new generation of professionals, the JCCs have upgraded the importance of Jewish education, both by improving their programs, and by insisting that center personnel be Jewishly knowledgeable.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>289</sup>On this heightened religious polarization, see Wertheimer, *A People Divided*, chap. 9. The decision of the Synagogue Council of America to fold its operations in November of 1994 offers further evidence of the inability of the religious groupings to work in concert. (Stewart Ain, “Synagogue Council Disbands,” *Jewish Week* [New York], Nov. 25 – Dec. 1, 1994, p. 10.) In recent years, the organization of rabbinic and synagogue bodies representing Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Judaism could not discuss internal Jewish matters, lest such discussions produce rancorous debates. It mainly became a forum for interfaith discussions with non-Jews, but it could not serve as a forum for intrafaith communication among rabbis representing different denominations.

<sup>290</sup>“JWB Born as Jewish Welfare Board, Now Jewish Community Centers of N.A.,” *JTA Community News Reporter*, May 11, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>291</sup>Murray Zuckoff, “JCCs: The Jewish Connection,” *JTS Daily News Bulletin*, part 1, May 12, 1986, p. 3; part 2, May 13, 1986, pp. 3 – 4.

<sup>292</sup>Despite this intensified concern for the Jewish identity of its members, JCCs have simulta-

In a few cities — Chicago offers a noteworthy model — JCCs even hired rabbis to serve as educational supervisors. This reorientation has brought JCCs into more frequent cooperative ventures with synagogues, though tensions and competition between the two types of institutions have hardly disappeared.

## COMMUNAL MAINTENANCE

### *Jewish Philanthropy*

The concern with Jewish continuity is closely linked to the subject of Jewish giving — of Jewish willingness to support the agencies and programs described above. Considerable research has been generated, mainly under federation auspices, to measure trends in Jewish philanthropy and volunteering. Here are some of the major findings:

The amount of money contributed to Jewish causes has declined since the middle of the century. In 1975, the Jewish community's gross national product was estimated at \$2.8 billion. Calculating Jewish giving in 1985, the sociologist Barry Kosmin concludes that under \$2 billion was contributed.<sup>293</sup> The drop in giving is even more precipitous when measured in uninflated, constant dollars: examining contributions to federation campaigns between 1971 and 1991, Gerald Bubis concludes that, after adjusting for inflation, there was a 28-percent drop in giving — this during a period of continuing, if not exponential, growth in Jewish wealth.<sup>294</sup>

The base of givers to Jewish causes remains quite narrow. An examination of givers to federation campaigns in 1987 found that a little over 1 percent of contributors accounted for 60 percent of the total contributions. By contrast, close to half of all contributors donated less than \$100, thereby providing only 2 percent of the total. "In real numbers, this translated into 13,000 givers contributing \$400 million compared to 450,000 contributing

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neously ceased to expect their members even to be Jewish. By 1990, Detroit's JCC was the last major center to accept only Jews as members; the JCC of Baltimore, the only other previous holdout, was advised by its attorneys "that it could not maintain its Jewish-only membership policy without jeopardizing primary funding" from nonsectarian sources. One can only wonder whether this open membership policy collides with the new desire to develop the Jewishness of its clientele. Gary Rosenblatt, "For the JCC, A Quiet Change," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Oct. 16, 1990, pp. 22 – 24, and Alan Hitsky, "Last Jewish JCC?" *Detroit Jewish News*, Oct. 30, 1992, p. 1.

<sup>293</sup>Barry A. Kosmin, "The Dimensions of Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy," in Kosmin and Ritterband, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy*, pp. 19 – 21.

<sup>294</sup>Gerald B. Bubis, "Jewish Dollars Drying Up," *Moment*, Dec. 1992, p. 31.

\$15 million"; another 1.4 million Jewish households made no contribution to a federation campaign.<sup>295</sup> By 1990, half of all funds raised by federated campaigns came from only one-half of 1 percent of all Jewish households.<sup>296</sup>

Although the main source of support comes from a small segment of the Jewish population, the majority of Jews still give to Jewish causes — albeit in small quantities. According to the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, 62 percent of entirely Jewish households claimed to have contributed to a Jewish charity in 1989.<sup>297</sup> Local surveys conducted in the 1980s found similar rates of giving: in San Francisco the figure was 60 percent,<sup>298</sup> in New York, in 1991, 64 percent claimed to contribute to Jewish causes.<sup>299</sup> The relatively similar patterns in these disparate communities should not obscure the variations from one community to the next. A team of sociologists examining such variations in fact discerned several patterns in federation giving: (1) The larger the Jewish community, the lower the level of participation in the campaign; and (2) the greater the recent growth in the community's size, the lower the level of participation in the campaign. Remarkably, for every additional 1,000 Jews, the number of gifts to the federated campaigns declines!<sup>300</sup>

Upon close examination, it is also evident that Jewish giving is not synonymous with contributions to federated campaigns. To take a particularly striking case, a survey of New York Jews in 1991 found that only half of the Jews who contributed to Jewish charities gave to the UJA-Federation drive (64 percent of respondents claimed a gift to a Jewish charity — excluding synagogue or school fees — and 33 percent reported giving a gift to the UJA-Federation campaign).<sup>301</sup> This points to yet another major trend in Jewish philanthropy, namely, that Jewish givers are increasingly interested in targeted giving rather than contributing to a central fund and relying upon planning committees to decide how communal funds can best be spent.

Targeted giving takes several forms. It expresses itself in the creation of groups such as the New Israel Fund and the Jewish Fund for Justice, which

<sup>295</sup>Norbert Fruehauf, "The Bottom Line: Major Gifts to Federation Campaigns," in Kosmin and Ritterband, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy*, p. 173.

<sup>296</sup>Bubis, "Jewish Dollars," p. 30.

<sup>297</sup>Kosmin et al., *Highlights of the CJF 1990 National Jewish Population Survey*, p. 36.

<sup>298</sup>Gary A. Tobin and Gabriel Berger, "Understanding Jewish Communal Involvement: Theoretical Issues and Policy Implications," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 8, 1992, p. 123.

<sup>299</sup>Bethamie Horowitz, *The 1991 New York Jewish Population Study* (UJA-Federation, New York, 1993), p. 73.

<sup>300</sup>Richard Silberstein, Paul Ritterband, Jonathan Rabinowitz, and Barry A. Kosmin, *Giving to Jewish Philanthropic Causes: A Preliminary Reconnaissance* (North American Jewish Data Bank, New York, Nov. 1987), pp. 3–5.

<sup>301</sup>Horowitz, *1991 New York Jewish Population Study*, pp. 73, 84.

give money only to certain types of projects. Donors can feel secure knowing their money will help support only the kinds of programs that conform to their ideological commitments. Along similar lines, it is evident that Orthodox Jews contribute primarily to Orthodox institutions at home and abroad. According to one estimate, Jews of a more right-wing outlook contribute 83 percent and the more modern Orthodox give 63 percent of their charitable money to Orthodox causes.<sup>302</sup> In all likelihood, these figures underestimate the degree of giving by Orthodox Jews to their own causes, an activity that helps reinforce group feeling and tangibly expresses a sense of alienation from, and criticism of, the larger community and its priorities. In an environment where increasing numbers of Jews prefer to target their giving, well-focused organizations with a clearly defined mission have done better than those with a diffuse agenda. Benefactors have preferred agencies such as the ADL and the Wiesenthal Center, with their high-profile work in defending Jews against anti-Semitic threats, over the multipronged activities of other community relations groups. Similarly, the "friends of" groups in Israel have gained at the expense of the broader UJA-Federation drives.<sup>303</sup>

Still another form of targeted giving has been the creation in recent decades of family foundations that decide their own priorities, rather than contribute to community campaigns. Among the largest of these are the Kahanoff Foundation (assets of \$350 – 400 million), the Nathan Cummings Foundation (assets of \$270 million), the Koret Foundation (\$173 million), the Charles R. Bronfman Foundation, the Charles H. Revson Foundation and the Zanyvl-Krieger Fund (\$100 million each), the Wexner Foundation and the Arie and Ida Crown Memorial Foundation (approximately \$80 million each).<sup>304</sup> Both the virtue and weakness of these foundations is their tendency to fund innovative programs, since this promotes new initiatives but also reduces the funds available for programs deemed essential by the larger planning structure of the Jewish community. Moreover, they generally contribute only a third of their funds to Jewish causes.<sup>305</sup>

This latter fact reflects yet another trend in Jewish philanthropy today: Jews are giving a declining share of their philanthropic dollars to Jewish causes. As compared to the early 1970s, when 70 percent of charitable donations by Jews went to Jewish causes, by the mid-1980s, only half of their giving found its way to Jewish causes.<sup>306</sup> Moreover, the wealthiest

<sup>302</sup>Samuel C. Heilman, "Tzedakah: Orthodox Jews and Charitable Giving," in Kosmin and Ritterband, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy*, p. 139.

<sup>303</sup>Fruehauf, "The Bottom Line," p. 180.

<sup>304</sup>Bubis, "Jewish Dollars," p. 33. Asset figures date to 1990 – 91.

<sup>305</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>306</sup>Arthur J. Magida, "Is Jewish Philanthropy Declining?" *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Oct. 14, 1988, p. 24.

individual Jews give staggering sums to non-Jewish institutions, sums that vastly exceed their gifts to Jewish causes. In the past decade, one wealthy Jewish philanthropist pledged \$150 million to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, another \$50 million to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and still others, between \$25 and \$30 million to nonsectarian hospitals and universities.<sup>307</sup> By contrast, the single largest gift to a Jewish educational institution was a \$15-million pledge to fund a school of Jewish education at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.<sup>308</sup> Even for Jews of more modest means, the rewards of giving to non-Jewish causes seem greater than for giving to Jewish ones. One donor reported that “for a \$1,000 donation to a Jewish cause he may get a form letter thanking him; but for \$1,000, the Boy Scouts treats him like a hero.”<sup>309</sup>

Federations have sought to accommodate these trends by providing opportunities for designated giving, though this runs the danger, as Donald Feldstein has observed, of reducing the federation to “nothing more than a bank or a temporary holding company for contributions.”<sup>310</sup> The approach favored by federations is to encourage donors to create a “field-of-interest” endowment fund, under which philanthropists donate a sum *above* their normal contribution to endow a program that community planners have already designated as a high-priority project — e.g., the Los Angeles Fund for Jewish Education, the New York federation’s Gruss Fund for Jewish Education, and Chicago’s Continuum program for capital facility development.<sup>311</sup> Still, the independence of givers poses serious challenges, depriving the federated community of dollars, inevitably favoring the off-beat, and leaving conventional needs — such as maintenance budgets — underfunded.

As a result of several factors already cited, the greatest growth in federated giving has come in the endowment field. Between 1975 and 1986, for example, the endowments of federations of Jewish philanthropy grew from under \$200 million to \$1.4 billion.<sup>312</sup> This growth has, undoubtedly, been stimulated by prudential concerns — putting money aside for “rainy day” needs — but also because federation fund-raisers feel their donor pool is

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<sup>307</sup>Milton Goldin, “Politics and Philanthropy: The State of American Jewish ‘Giving,’” *Congress Monthly*, Sept./Oct. 1989, pp. 8–9.

<sup>308</sup>David Gonzalez, “American Jews Focus on Preserving Their Identity,” *New York Times*, Oct. 13, 1994, p. B1.

<sup>309</sup>Carrie Gottlieb, “Study Raises Concerns About Trends in Jewish Philanthropy,” *Long Island Jewish World*, Jan. 10–16, 1992, p. 19.

<sup>310</sup>Donald Feldstein, “The Changing Client System of Jewish Federations,” in Kosmin and Ritterband, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy*, p. 227.

<sup>311</sup>Feinstein, “The Future of Philanthropy,” p. 137.

<sup>312</sup>Barry A. Kosmin, “The Political Economy of Gender in Jewish Federations,” *Contemporary Jewry* 10, no. 1, 1989, p. 20.

disappearing and will not be replaced in the next generation. Inter-marriage is depriving the Jewish community of many offspring of wealthy Jews, and increased giving to non-Jewish causes is siphoning money from the organized Jewish community. Thus, the accumulation of massive endowment funds is a mixed blessing: it provides savings for use during lean years to come, but also is predicated on the assumption that the future of Jewish giving is bleak.<sup>313</sup>

There seems to be little disagreement among students of Jewish philanthropy as to the underlying factors accounting for these patterns. For one thing, there is evidence that wealthy Jews — like other Americans of their class — are giving less philanthropy altogether; in the decade of the 1980s, the number of Americans reporting annual incomes over \$1 million leaped from 4,300 to over 60,000, but the amount of philanthropy contributed by millionaires declined by 60 percent.<sup>314</sup>

A critical challenge facing all fund-raisers is the intensified competition for philanthropic dollars in the country overall. Particularly worrisome from the perspective of Jewish fund-raisers is the tendency of the children of major Jewish benefactors to shift their philanthropy outside the Jewish community. In a pilot project examining the philanthropic patterns of the offspring of major donors to Jewish causes, sociologist Egon Mayer concluded that “[s]ubstantial Jewish family fortunes pass out of the orbit of the organized Jewish community because the inheritors of those fortunes do not inherit the legacy of their parents’ and grandparents’ Jewish philanthropic impulses. Thus, the cistern of Jewish communal funds needs to be replenished from ever-new sources, rather than being able to depend upon constant well-springs.”<sup>315</sup> Indeed, one reason for the formation of family foundations has been to insure major donors that “the family’s money and giving will remain Jewish even when the next or future generation of the family is no longer Jewish.”<sup>316</sup>

Second-generation Jews, the children of immigrants, have tended to contribute most generously to Jewish causes because they “were still nurtured by Old World memories and traditions related by their parents but are sufficiently westernized to appreciate the need for the style of large-scale, bureaucratized philanthropy.” Third- and fourth-generation Jews are less likely to be moved “by the moral imperatives of the Jewish religious tradi-

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<sup>313</sup>Deborah Kaplan Polivy, “All Signs Point to Endowment,” *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Winter/Spring 1993, pp. 62 – 68. The author presents the case for federation endowments in positive terms, but her rationale for building such funds now belies her upbeat tone.

<sup>314</sup>Bubis, “Jewish Dollars,” p. 31.

<sup>315</sup>Egon Mayer, “Intergenerational Philanthropic Slippage: The Case of Children of Major Jewish Philanthropic Families in New York City,” in Kosmin and Ritterband, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy*, p. 147.

<sup>316</sup>Kosmin, “Dimensions of . . . Philanthropy,” p. 28.

tion and are less likely to be formally affiliated with the Jewish community and thus less accessible to Jewish charitable campaigns. Simply stated, third- and fourth-generation Jews are less likely to be asked to give."<sup>317</sup>

When they examine level of income as a variable, as opposed to generation, sociologists note a paradoxical pattern of giving. Lower-income Jews are less likely to give to federation campaigns than are other Americans of lower income to comparable non-Jewish campaigns. Thirty percent of the lowest Jewish income group reports giving a gift as compared to 81 percent of the top income group. However, when lower-income people are asked to give, they contribute in significant numbers, which suggests that federations are so preoccupied with targeting the well-to-do Jews that they neglect lower-income Jews. This problem is then compounded by the steep fall-off in giving to Jewish causes among high-income Jews.

Caught between the higher- and lower-income groups is the large swath of middle-class Jews whose giving is circumscribed by real and imagined pressures on their income. The cost of living Jewishly continues to soar. Studies conducted during the 1980s concluded that after paying synagogue membership dues or High Holy Day seating fees, tuition for the Jewish schooling for their children, and making a \$100 contribution to the federation, middle-class families "would have exceeded the percentage of income the U.S. government assumes a family would have given for *all* gifts and contributions."<sup>318</sup> Many middle-class Jews also undoubtedly feel pressure to compete or hold their own with well-to-do relatives and friends in throwing more lavish weddings and bar/bat mitzvahs than they can afford.<sup>319</sup> Still, when sociologists compare the philanthropic behavior of Orthodox Jews to that of other middle-class Jews, they cannot fail to note that the latter may lack motivation rather than means. Barry Kosmin has framed the issue succinctly:

How is it that one often meets people who claim they cannot afford to join Jewish organizations such as Hadassah or B'nai B'rith yet they regularly spend the

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<sup>317</sup>Paul Ritterband, "Determinants of Jewish Charitable Giving in the Last Part of the Twentieth Century," in Kosmin and Ritterband, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy*, p. 63. Mixed-marriage families have the lowest rates of giving to Jewish charities (28 percent claimed to have given in 1989) and even lower rates of contributions to federated campaigns (only 12 percent), but they give to secular charities at the same high rates as entirely Jewish households. Kosmin et al., *Highlights of the CJF 1990 National Jewish Population Survey*, p. 36.

<sup>318</sup>Bubis, "Jewish Dollars," p. 30. See also J. Alan Winter, "An Estimate of the Affordability of Living Jewishly," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 61, no. 3, Spring 1985, pp. 247–56; idem, "Keeping the Cost of Living Jewishly Affordable," in *Jewish Identity in America*, ed. David M. Gordis and Yoav Ben Horin (Wilstein Institute, Los Angeles, 1991), pp. 253–66; Kosmin, "Dimensions of . . . Philanthropy," p. 22; Rela Geffen, "How Affordable Is Jewish Living?" *Reform Judaism*, Spring 1994, p. 47ff.; and Aryeh Meir and Lisa Hostein, *The High Cost of Jewish Living* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1992).

<sup>319</sup>Kosmin, "Dimensions of . . . Philanthropy," p. 23.

equivalent of the annual dues for one dinner at a restaurant? Obviously it is not just a matter of product pricing. Membership in the Jewish community and its religious bodies has been transformed from a necessity to a luxury item among such people. Unless they can be persuaded that Judaism and the community organizations offer something “priceless” and of “lasting value,” they will not change their current value system in all senses of the term.

Kosmin correctly identifies the essential problem of American Jewish philanthropy and affiliation: “Organized American Judaism has largely failed to create a substantial body of true believers willing to sacrifice for their faith.”<sup>320</sup>

Jewish giving correlates directly with Jewish living. As sociologist Paul Ritterband notes:

Those who are most involved in Jewish life give most of their money to Jewish causes. The Orthodox, who were laggards in the Federation campaign, are the most likely to give to Jewish campaigns, generally followed closely by the Conservatives, with the Reform adherents far behind. Members of Jewish organizations and Jews with Jewish friendship circles are the most generous to Jewish causes.<sup>321</sup>

As the share of Jews who identify as Conservative declines, and more Jews claim the Reform or no religious label, the rank and file of pan-Jewish supporters erodes.<sup>322</sup>

### *Voluntarism*

In addition to donating funds to charitable causes, Jews participate in organizational life by offering their services as volunteers. The most basic — albeit, passive — measure of such voluntarism is affiliation with a Jewish institution. In a country like the United States, which does not compel Jews to express their identification with Jewish life, joining or supporting a Jewish institution serves as “the public badge of Jewish identification.”<sup>323</sup> It provides a tangible means for Jews to link themselves to the Jewish collective endeavor. The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey found that, among the “core Jewish population,” 41 percent claimed current synagogue membership, “28 percent reported belonging to one or more Jewish organizations other than a synagogue or temple, and only 13 percent

<sup>320</sup>Barry A. Kosmin, “How Affordable Is Jewish Living?” *Reform Judaism*, Spring 1994, p. 48.

<sup>321</sup>Ritterband, “Determinants,” p. 68.

<sup>322</sup>A recent study has also correlated contributions to Jewish charities with formal Jewish schooling, finding that the more Jewish education Jews received when they were young, the greater their tendency to give to the UJA-Federation and other types of Jewish philanthropy. Seymour Martin Lipset, *The Power of Jewish Education* (Wilstein Institute of Jewish Policy Studies, Los Angeles and Brookline, Mass., 1994), p. 24.

<sup>323</sup>This is the formulation of Jonathan Woocher, quoted by Cohen and Rosen, *Organizational Affiliation of American Jews*, p. 1.

belonged to two or more."<sup>324</sup> Synagogue and organizational affiliation are highest in older, more stable Jewish communities in mid-sized cities. And the population most likely to join are Jews who are married to other Jews, are parents of children of school age, and are between 35 and 49 years of age. Conversely, affiliation rates are lowest among younger adults under age 35, especially singles, and retirees, particularly those who have recently relocated to Sunbelt communities or who live in the cities with the largest Jewish populations — New York and Los Angeles.<sup>325</sup>

Not surprisingly, smaller percentages of Jews claim to partake in more active forms of voluntarism. Merely 21 percent of individuals who define themselves as Jewish by religion claimed to have volunteered for a Jewish organization in 1989, and under 10 percent of other types of Jews did so.<sup>326</sup> When the actual amount of time devoted to voluntary activity was measured, it was found that the vast majority of volunteers devote less than one hour a month to such activities; by contrast, a mere 5 percent of adult Jews claimed to spend 20 or more hours per month volunteering for Jewish organizations.<sup>327</sup> Since volunteer activities require an investment of time and energy that not all Jews can afford — e.g., the elderly — it is understandable that not all Jews participate. Still, a voluntary community such as American Jewry can ill afford to have four-fifths of its population remain on the sidelines as bystanders and only 5 percent assume the role of activists.

In a study of voluntarism in four Jewish communities of various sizes and demographic characteristics, sociologist Gabriel Berger found that the people most likely to volunteer for Jewish organizations are middle-aged, married people with children at home, members of more recent generations, and women; people with higher income levels, graduate education, and part-time employment are also more apt to volunteer. Other attributes associated with volunteering for Jewish organizations are formal Jewish education, visits to Israel, having Jews as closest friends, attendance at synagogue services, observance of more religious practices, membership in Jewish

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<sup>324</sup>Cohen and Rosen, *Organization Affiliation of American Jews*, p. 2. The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey distinguished between born Jews who identified themselves as Jewish by religion or a secular definition, on the one hand, and individuals who were born Jewish but raised in other religions. Only individuals in the first category were included in the core Jewish population.

<sup>325</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2. Cohen and Rosen found slightly higher rates of affiliation in their survey of American Jews; see pp. 8 – 9. One study contended that geographic mobility affects Orthodox and Conservative Jews differently than Reform and nonaffiliated Jews. See Charles Jaret, "The Impact of Geographic Mobility on Jewish Community Participation: Disruptive or Supportive?" *Contemporary Jewry* 4, no. 2, Spring/Summer 1978, pp. 9 – 21.

<sup>326</sup>Kosmin et al., p. 35.

<sup>327</sup>Gary A. Tobin, "The Vanishing Volunteer," reprinted from a Brandeis University newsletter in *Renewal*, a publication of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater, Va. (vol. 4, no. 2, Nov. 1987), p. 32.

organizations and synagogues, contributions to Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, and volunteering for general organizations.<sup>328</sup> Berger's conclusions have been borne out by several other studies examining different Jewish sample populations.<sup>329</sup>

Several of these findings warrant further explication. First, patterns of voluntarism and giving dovetail substantially. Jews who invest their time in organizational activity are also apt to put their money into the same causes. The two activities complement one another.<sup>330</sup> Significantly, Jews who perform voluntary activities for non-Jewish causes do not necessarily stint on their Jewish involvements — that is to say, volunteers for non-Jewish organizations have higher rates of participation in Jewish organizations, not only as members but also as volunteers.<sup>331</sup>

The most important factor in the voluntary activities of Jews, however, is their engagement in Jewish religious and cultural life.<sup>332</sup> Previous Jewish education, for example, correlates strongly with volunteering: "The range of those who report volunteer activities descends from 29 percent for those with more than 15 years of study to 16 percent for those with less than five years of study, and ultimately to 10 percent for those unschooled in Jewish learning," according to Seymour Martin Lipset.<sup>333</sup> Moreover, denominational identification and religious observance correlate strongly with voluntary activities<sup>334</sup> (as they do with giving to Jewish causes). In a study conducted by social scientists Renae Cohen and Sherry Rosen, "The Orthodox were much more likely than the just Jewish to affiliate with the organized Jewish community in every way. The Orthodox Jews were followed by the Conservative Jews and then Reform Jews, although the strength of these differences varies by type of affiliation." Moreover, denominational

<sup>328</sup>Gabriel Berger, *Voluntarism Among American Jews*, Research Report 5 (Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 1991), p. iii.

<sup>329</sup>See, for example, Mordechai Rimor and Gary A. Tobin, "Jewish Fund-raising and Jewish Identity," in Lawrence J. Sternberg, Gary A. Tobin, and Sylvia Barack Fishman, *Changing Jewish Life: Service Delivery and Planning in the 1990s, Contributions in Sociology*, no. 99 (Westport, Conn., 1991), pp. 47 – 51; Sylvia Barack Fishman and Alice Goldstein, *When They Are Grown They Will Not Depart: Jewish Education and the Jewish Behavior of American Adults* (Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, Mar. 1993), p. 8; and Cohen and Rosen, *Organizational Affiliation of American Jews*, p. 23.

<sup>330</sup>Judith Sloan Deutsch, "Jewish Volunteers There for the Asking!" *Washington Jewish Week*, Apr. 4, 1990, p. 35.

<sup>331</sup>Berger, *Voluntarism*, p. iii.

<sup>332</sup>Significantly, only 5 percent of self-professed secular Jews performed volunteer work for a Jewish organization. Kosmin et al., *NJPS Highlights*, p. 35.

<sup>333</sup>Lipset, *Power of Jewish Education*, p. 24.

<sup>334</sup>Identifying with a major religious faith and attending religious services frequently are positively associated with Protestant and Catholic voluntarism, too. See Virginia Hodgkinson and Murray Weitzman, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States: Findings from a National Survey* (Independent Sector, Washington, D.C., 1988).

identification also correlated with the degree to which an individual preferred that Jewish organizations pursue parochial Jewish interests rather than universalistic ones.<sup>335</sup> Finally, having Jewish friends correlated strongly with volunteering for Jewish organizations, undoubtedly because of the social nature of voluntary work.<sup>336</sup>

Interestingly, gender does not figure as a major factor in the incidence of Jewish giving or volunteering. In their study of affiliation, Cohen and Rosen found little or no difference in the types of Jewish organizational affiliations of men and women: they joined synagogues, belonged to Jewish organizations, volunteered, attended meetings, paid dues, held office, and gave money and gifts at approximately the same rates.<sup>337</sup> Upon closer examination, of course, important differences emerge in the ways men and women channel their giving and voluntary activities. To take an obvious point first, there are separate women's campaign divisions within the federation structure. In 1986, some 105 women's divisions raised 12.2 percent of the regular campaign total and another \$1.5 million for Project Renewal.<sup>338</sup> According to a recent estimate, the women's division raises 20 percent of the UJA budget.<sup>339</sup> In addition, a range of women's organizations serve either as auxiliaries to institutions — e.g., synagogue sisterhoods and women's divisions of Jewish organizations, such as B'nai B'rith — or act independently — Hadassah, to name the largest women's organization. A great many women contribute their time and money to organized Jewish life within the confines of these separate bodies.

When the so-called second wave of the feminist movement gained momentum in the late 1960s and early 1970s, pressures built to eliminate women's divisions from Jewish organizational life; the American Jewish Congress, for example, abolished its division for women in the 1970s, only to recreate a Commission on Women's Equality, because "women wanted to act together."<sup>340</sup> Still, women's organizations have been severely criticized by feminists. Historian Paula Hyman, for example, believed that by the late 20th century, women's volunteer organizations had become a "rear-guard" rather than the "vanguard."<sup>341</sup> Some feminists challenged women to abandon their voluntary work entirely. One described the entire system as exploitative, since "more than a million [Jewish women] volunteers . . . 'work' for no pay at all — a virtual underground of antlike burrowers in our

<sup>335</sup>Cohen and Rosen, *Organizational Affiliation of American Jews*, pp. 17–18.

<sup>336</sup>Berger, *Voluntarism*, pp. 7–8.

<sup>337</sup>Cohen and Rosen, *Organizational Affiliation of American Jews*, pp. 21–22.

<sup>338</sup>Kosmin, "The Political Economy of Gender," pp. 18–19.

<sup>339</sup>Susan Weidman Schneider, "Jewish Women's Philanthropy," *Lilith*, Winter 1993, p. 38.

<sup>340</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>341</sup>Paula Hyman, "The Volunteer Organizations: Vanguard or Rearguard?" *Lilith*, no. 5, 1979, pp. 17, 22.

social welfare institutions. . . . Why have trained, educated, 'aware' women opted for voluntarism, instead of structured work or creativity, during or after childbearing years?" asked Doris Gold. Another feminist characterized voluntary work as "a placebo" and "a distorted form of occupational therapy" meant to keep Jewish women "busy with trivia and involved with a lot of time-consuming activities."<sup>342</sup> As increasing numbers of Jewish women entered the labor force in the seventies and eighties, and volunteer work was derided, organizations that had depended upon women volunteers — ranging from synagogues, to women's divisions, to women's organizations — feared the worst — a crisis of "vanishing volunteers."<sup>343</sup>

A more sober assessment suggests some important restructuring of women's activities as volunteers, but not their disappearance from voluntary work. In her study of Rhode Island Jews, demographer Alice Goldstein found that "although women working full time are as likely as those not in the labor force to join at least one Jewish organization, they do not join as many. With more constraints on their time, these women are more selective about the number of organizations which they join." The data support "the generally held assumption that women's entry into the labor force has served to weaken their involvement in organizational activities."<sup>344</sup> Jewish women's organizations have adapted their agendas in order to make themselves more attractive to younger, working women, particularly by becoming advocates on women's issues. Groups such as Hadassah and ORT have thrown themselves into the national debate over abortion, and B'nai B'rith Women has lobbied within the Jewish community for equality of pay.<sup>345</sup> Women's organizations also meet at times that are more convenient for working members. By taking a more flexible approach to scheduling and the allocation of organizational responsibilities, women's volunteer groups have been able to attract new members to rebuild their depleted membership bases.<sup>346</sup>

#### LEADERSHIP

The vast machinery of Jewish organizational life requires a cadre of committed volunteers to oversee its operations, set policies, plan for the

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<sup>342</sup>Quoted by Sylvia Barack Fishman in *A Breath of Life: Feminism in the American Jewish Community* (New York, 1993), p. 75.

<sup>343</sup>Karen A. and Lawrence S. Katz, "Vanishing Volunteers," *Detroit Jewish News*, Oct. 10, 1986, pp. 14 – 19.

<sup>344</sup>Alice Goldstein, "New Roles, New Commitments? Jewish Women's Involvement in the Community's Organizational Structure," *Contemporary Jewry* 11, no. 1, 1990, p. 66.

<sup>345</sup>James David Besser, "Breaking Away," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Jan. 26, 1990, pp. 48 – 52.

<sup>346</sup>Katz, "Vanishing Volunteers," p. 15.

future, and speak on behalf of American Jewry. This lay leadership has come under scrutiny in recent years. In early 1990, the most comprehensive study of lay leadership conducted to date — under the auspices of the American Jewish Committee's Task Force on American Jewish Leadership — found, not surprisingly, that lay leaders tend to be wealthy (over half reported annual family incomes of over \$100,000) and highly educated (60 percent held postgraduate degrees).<sup>347</sup> The overwhelming majority of men and women were married and virtually all had children. The sample population also evinced higher levels of Jewish engagement than the general Jewish populace: only 3 percent were in interfaith marriages (though 26 percent had children who were married to non-Jews), and more than one-third claimed to attend synagogue services at least once a month. Jewish leaders were better educated Jewishly<sup>348</sup> and read Jewish books with greater regularity than the rest of the Jewish populace.

The study also found evidence that challenges the accuracy of several commonly held beliefs about Jewish leaders. For one thing, leaders were not necessarily the biggest givers. Committee work and board involvement demanded too great a time investment for most big givers.<sup>349</sup> For another, most leaders began their volunteer activities at young ages and advanced rapidly. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that pictures impediments to the advancement of young people, three-quarters of the respondents had assumed positions of leadership by age 35.<sup>350</sup> Finally, the experience of the sample group challenged claims that Jewish organizations are self-insulated environments designed to keep newcomers at bay. The preponderant majority claimed they had been recruited actively for participation in an organization and eventually for leadership.<sup>351</sup>

In the last quarter century, there has been much debate over whether women are recruited for leadership positions or whether a "glass ceiling" limits their ability to rise up the organizational ladder. At the General Assembly of the CJF held in 1972, Jacqueline Levine, then president of the Women's Division of the American Jewish Congress, demanded that women be given access to "higher levels of decision- and policy-making."<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>347</sup>Jacob Ukeles, *American Jewish Leadership: A Study* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1991). See also *Report on the AJC Task Force on American Jewish Leadership* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1991). For a concise summary, see Stewart Ain, "Survey Finds Jewish Leaders Wealthy and Wise," *Jewish Week* (New York), Apr. 12–18, 1991, p. 26.

<sup>348</sup>Federation leaders in New York City in the 1970s tended to have a background of more intensive Jewish education than their predecessors. See Charles S. Liebman, "Leadership and Decision-Making in a Jewish Federation: The New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies," *AJYB* 1979, vol. 79, p. 61.

<sup>349</sup>Ain, "Survey Finds Jewish Leaders Wealthy and Wise," p. 26.

<sup>350</sup>Ukeles, *American Jewish Leadership*, p. 39.

<sup>351</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.

The women's movement and other social changes have gradually created an environment in which women serve on boards of federations and fill a variety of leadership positions. By 1986, for example, one-fifth of the presidents of the 187 federations were women. The position of secretary of the board was filled by women in over half the federations studied, and one-quarter of the treasurers were women.<sup>353</sup> Still, there has been much dissatisfaction with the uneven distribution of women in key board and committee positions. Women, for example, are far more likely to serve on human-resource committees than on the more powerful and prestigious campaign and allocations committees.<sup>354</sup> In the early 1990s, the Council of Jewish Federations commissioned a study to find out why women who have reached the top echelons of the federation world are still the exceptions. The researchers sought to understand why only 7 percent of women held the presidencies of federations in 1993 — a steep drop from the mid-1980s — and why not one of the executives of the 16 largest federations was a woman.<sup>355</sup>

Although professional staff members have not been studied systematically, students of the American Jewish community have discerned a shift in the Jewish identification of agency personnel. In part due to the formation of several communal service programs under Jewish auspices, younger workers in the Jewish organizational world have been exposed to a systematic curriculum of Jewish learning. Moreover, they appear more religiously engaged. Many commentators have noted the proliferation of males wearing yarmulkes at the annual General Assembly of the CJF and the greater visibility of Jewish religious behavior during the conference.<sup>356</sup> Since the 1970s, Orthodox Jews have assumed leading administrative positions at the Council of Jewish Federations, the Presidents Conference, at all of the national community relations organizations, the World Jewish Congress, and many local federations. Religiously committed Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform Jews, including a number of ordained rabbis, now constitute the majority of Jewish civil servants. Thus, professional staff

<sup>352</sup>Quoted by Kosmin, "The Political Economy of Gender," p. 21.

<sup>353</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>354</sup>Ibid., pp. 23 – 24.

<sup>355</sup>Rachel Blustain, "Federation Report Due to Focus on Women in Jewish Leadership," *Forward*, Oct. 7, 1994, p. 1. The report appeared in Jan. 1995 and led to the formation of a Women's Advocacy Department by the Council of Jewish Federations. Rachel Blustain, "Women Found Absent from Top UJA Posts," *Forward*, Jan. 6, 1995, p. 1. It found that among federation professionals, women constituted 60 percent of the personnel and department heads, but not one woman served as the executive director of a large city federation. See also Amy Stone, "The Jewish Establishment Is NOT an Equal Opportunity Employer," *Lilith*, Fall/Winter 1977/78, pp. 25 – 26.

<sup>356</sup>Jonathan Woocher, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (Bloomington, Ind., 1986), p. 153.

members of Jewish organizations today tend to have a very different outlook and background than their predecessors of the midcentury period. Many become Jewish civil servants out of strong survivalist and religious impulses, rather than the universalist and integrationist ideals that animated an earlier generation of professionals. Some of the older generation fret that their successors are too insular to carry on the important work of building bridges to other groups. Whether or not one shares such fears, it is clear that the new generation of professionals has played a major role in reorienting the community to issues of survivalism.<sup>357</sup>

The looming challenge of Jewish leadership is whether both lay and professional leaders are representative of the population they lead. In the past, leaders were criticized for being too eager to integrate and too cavalier with traditional Jewish religious and cultural values. Today it appears that Jewish leaders are far more religiously committed and Jewishly knowledgeable than the rank and file. At a time of declining interest in Israel, especially on the part of younger Jews, leaders overwhelmingly rank the safety of the Jewish state as the most important item on the Jewish agenda. And at a time when large percentages of Jews are minimally engaged — particularly in religious life — more than half of Jewish leaders surveyed rank Jewish education and the strengthening of Jewish identity as top priorities.<sup>358</sup> The phenomenon noted by Cohen and Ritterband 15 years ago in the field of Jewish philanthropy<sup>359</sup> applies as well to leadership — the more committed Jews are also more active as leaders.

### Conclusion

We have focused our discussion on two critical trends in Jewish organizational life during the past quarter century: one is the will to achieve coordination and unity of purpose, the second is the countervailing pressures exerted by ideological dissension over the best way to insure Jewish survival. On the one hand, the American Jewish community has achieved an

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<sup>357</sup>There is a danger that severe budgetary retrenchment is eroding the quality of the Jewish civil service. Professionally trained communal workers, let alone products of specialized Jewish communal service programs trained at ten institutions scattered throughout the United States, are now being displaced by lower paid, less educated personnel. As noted by Gerald Bubis, "JCCs and federations, which used to require an MSW degree for most of their positions, are now engaging in the three L's — local, less, and lower" by hiring staff from their own communities, many of whom are former volunteers who are prepared to accept lower salaries. Gerald B. Bubis, "Jewish Communal Service Today: Paradoxes and Problems," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Fall 1994, p. 8.

<sup>358</sup>Ukeles, *American Jewish Leadership*, p. 50.

<sup>359</sup>Steven M. Cohen and Paul Ritterband, "Will the Well Run Dry? The Future of Jewish Giving in America," *Response*, Summer 1979, p. 10.

unprecedented degree of institutional cooperation through the instrumentalities of local federations and national umbrella agencies. Such unity enabled the community to launch major relief efforts and lobbying campaigns to aid embattled coreligionists abroad and to fund an impressive network of domestic programs at home. In turn, these successful efforts emboldened coordinating bodies to extend their reach; for example, encouraging the Council of Jewish Federations to tax its constituents to meet national and regional needs and propelling the Presidents Conference and AIPAC into the theater of American foreign policy deliberations.

On the other hand, centrifugal forces have been spinning groups away from the vortex of the organized Jewish community. A range of new institutions compete for members and dollars with established community relations agencies, defining their own positions on anti-Semitism and American social policy. Simultaneously, new foundations are independently disbursing Jewish philanthropy in Israel and within the United States, paying little heed to the priorities of the major communal funding organizations and rejecting the model of a community governed by institutions that centralize planning and allocations activities. Moreover, groups on the right and left of the ideological spectrum are breaking with the consensus of the organized Jewish community on once sacrosanct issues: from the right, challenging the community's long-standing commitment to the separationist doctrine, or the wisdom of alliances with liberal groups; from the left, introducing radical proposals to rethink the agenda and structure of the community, to make it more representative, more accountable, more responsive.<sup>360</sup> As the larger world of American politics polarizes, there is every likelihood that internal Jewish governance will be further fractured by divisiveness and ideological conflict.

The organized community must contend with long-term trends as well. One is the stagnation — if not decline — in Jewish giving.<sup>361</sup> Since not every good cause can be funded, the financial crunch will continue to force central planning bodies to sharpen their priorities; constricted budgets will also continue to force Jewish agencies to streamline their operations. Leaving aside vexing budgetary problems, these circumstances also threaten the very coordination the organized community has worked to achieve. Jewish organizations will increasingly compete with one another for money from the same shrinking donor base, and donors will target their giving to favorite causes — two processes that subvert the goals of federated campaigns.

The financial crunch, however, is a symptom of a larger challenge posed by Jewish disaffiliation. Large percentages of the American Jewish population do not regard Jewish causes as the primary recipients of their charitable

<sup>360</sup>See Aviva Cantor, "The Sounds of Silence," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Sept. 2, 1994, p. 36.

<sup>361</sup>*One Vision: The Strategic Plan for UJA-Federation of New York* (June 1993), p. 31.

giving and do not volunteer their time for Jewish organizational work. A highly motivated minority of the Jewish population shoulders the tasks of communal maintenance for a majority that only occasionally participates in Jewish group activities. The looming debate, as the Jewish community concentrates its attention on its domestic problems, focuses precisely on the proper relationship between the center and the periphery: Should the community invest its finite resources in campaigns to woo unaffiliated Jews or should it concentrate on strengthening its core population? How can those who are only partially engaged be inspired to more intensive group involvement? And when it comes to spending for Jewish education at all age levels, are the community's limited funds most effectively spent on "outreach" to marginal Jews or on "inreach" to the already engaged?<sup>362</sup> Thus, just a few decades after achieving unprecedented levels of acceptance and integration within American society and mounting bold initiatives in the international arena to aid beleaguered coreligionists abroad, the organized Jewish community in the closing years of the 20th century now engages in sober self-examination to address the pressing challenges to its collective survival in the United States.

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<sup>362</sup>For some early expressions of this debate, see Egon Mayer, ed., "Jewish Inter-marriage, Conversion and Outreach," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* 66, no. 3, Spring 1990, pp. 3 – 64; and Steven Bayme, "Outreach Has Its Risks," *Jewish Week* (New York), Oct. 21 – 27, 1994, p. 5.