

REINVENTING NORTH AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNAL STRUCTURES

The Crisis of Normality

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The author played a central role in the complex merger of the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF), the United Jewish Appeal (UJA), and the United Israel Appeal (UIA) that resulted in the creation of the United Jewish Communities (UJC) in 1999.

Dr. Solomon chronicled that process in an incisive article in the Fall/Winter 1999 edition of the Journal of Jewish Communal Service. He concluded that the success or failure of the UJC would depend, in large measure, on "professionals and volunteers who are committed to the risks of change."

With the publication of "The Crisis of Normality," Dr. Solomon begins to assess the future of this critically important communal structure in Jewish life in North America and, indeed, throughout the Jewish world.

A basic hypothesis underscores much of this analysis of the organized American Jewish community scene today: The reorganization that resulted in the creation of the United Jewish Communities and the dissolution of the United Jewish Appeal, Council of Jewish Federations, and United Israel Appeal is the first Jewish organizational change created from non-events. Today's crisis is that we have no crisis. Normalcy has emerged in the American Jewish community as a blessing of American and Jewish life.

Yet, the resolution of the crises of the late 19th and much of the 20th century is ironically, the greatest crisis that American Jewish organization life faces today. By any standards, Jews have achieved success. As has been often observed, when Jews succeed, Judaism suffers. We do best when we are mobilizing for action. The pressing issues in American Jewish life today are less uniquely Jewish and more typical of other American subgroups than ever before.

Six conditions led to the enormous success of American Jewish organization life, especially philanthropy.

1. The Jewish community was affluent.
2. Jews self-identified as Jews.
3. As such, they felt a sense of insecurity caused by anti-Semitism in society, manifested by quotas and glass ceilings and essential risks to Jews in different parts of the world.
4. There was an organic connection to nation-building in Israel, both for the glory of the struggle and as an insurance policy for Diaspora Jews feeling vulnerable after the Holocaust.
5. There was comfort with making a single gift to the "community" and letting community leadership decide how best to divide the gift among competing needs, following from the traditions of the *Kehillah*.
6. There were very few secular organizational options because Jews were not readily welcome into the leadership of the great universities, museums, and hospitals. Indeed, Jews built their own such institutions.

Of these six conditions, only the first remains true—the community continues to be an affluent one. However, assimilation into American society has eaten away at the self-identity of Jews. The community's very suc-

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cess has diminished the sense of insecurity. The very universities that had Jewish quotas a generation or two ago have Jewish presidents today. Few Jews in the world are at risk. Recent research demonstrates that the connection to Israel is weakening, especially among younger Jews who did not experience either the Holocaust or an Israel constantly on the brink of survival. Individuals want to follow their philanthropy to end-point decision making. While federation annual campaigns in the last decade have lost more than one-third of their buying power and are flat, donor-participatory campaigns, those in which donors retain the ability to advise on the use of their gift, have increased in the federation system alone by some 186 percent in the same ten years. Finally, secular organizations outside the Jewish community are capturing two-thirds of Jewish giving, up from one-third just a generation ago. Jewish philanthropists dominate the nation's great arts, educational, and health care institutions.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PREDECESSOR ORGANIZATIONS

To appreciate fully the paradigmatic shift emerging in Jewish organizational life, an analysis of the creation of United Jewish Communities (UJC) from the United Jewish Appeal (UJA), Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) and United Israel Appeal (UIA) is in order, beginning with some background information about the predecessor organizations.

The United Jewish Appeal, organized just after *Kristallnacht* in 1938, operated in behalf of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Indeed, UJA was owned by the United Israel Appeal in behalf of the Jewish Agency and the JDC via a corporate structure in which these were the sole two members of the UJA corporation. The Council of Jewish Federations, organized in 1932, was a membership organization of the federations throughout the United States. These federations, raised funds for both local needs and overseas needs. It is poorly understood that the 188 federa-

tions always had local autonomy. Indeed, they could choose to earmark as much or as little of their funds for overseas needs as their indigenous leadership chose. In the decade prior to the merger, the overseas share of the aggregate annual campaign—that going to the Jewish Agency for Israel and the JDC—dropped from 55 percent to 38 percent. The reasons for diminishing support for overseas are rooted in the history of the federation movement and of organized Jewish philanthropy in the United States. Federations are more than 100 years old, having started in Boston in 1895; federations in Cleveland, Baltimore, St. Louis, and Milwaukee were established in the next ten years.

While Jews from Spain and Portugal arrived very early in the colonial history of the United States, the first significant migration occurred in the 1840s from Germany. These Jews thrived within the context of American freedom as successful merchants, bankers, and professionals. With the 1880s came the beginning of an influx of Eastern European Jews, characterized by greater religiosity and adherence to Old World customs, massive immigrant poverty, and associated social dysfunction. The established German Jews created settlement houses, hospitals, clinics, homes for the aged, children's services and a range of programs to meet the needs of their co-religionists. As described by Hertzberg (1989, p. 182):

Though the German Jews were almost unanimous in regarding themselves to be a different breed, they were also very nearly one of mind in accepting responsibilities for the Russian Jews. This concern was only part a form of self-defense against the anti-Semites, as a way of keeping these Russian Jews from being too embarrassing. There was an element of wanting to behave, and to be seen to behave, in the way expected of 'better people' in the America of the last decades of the 19th century.

Beginning in the 1890s, local federations developed as the central fundraising, planning, and allocating agencies to meet these

needs. Federations emerged in newer communities as Jews settled in areas other than large Eastern and Midwestern cities. While distinctly separate from synagogues and *yeshivot*, the federations became the Jewish communities' health and social service network. They also became very effective fundraising agencies, raising millions of dollars annually as early as the beginning of the twentieth century.

Daniel Elazar (1995, p. 2) argues that it is precisely the development of federations that defines American Jewish life.

To know American Jewry as a force and as a factor in Jewish life or Jewish history is only in a limited way a matter of intermarriage statistics or demographic trends. More concretely, it is a matter of how those Jews who choose to be Jews, act collectively to achieve Jewish goals, how the American Jewish community has overcome the problems of a beneficent post emancipation existence to define Jewish goals for itself and build the institutions needed to achieve those goals.

In 1918, as the JDC was dealing with European Jewish communities devastated in the wake of World War I, federations assisted by running separate overseas campaigns, which yielded millions of dollars. At that time, they did not see these overseas Jewish relief efforts as part of their core mission and so did not integrate them into their core operations. The competition between local needs and overseas needs continued as American Jews debated Zionist, anti-Zionist, and non-Zionist approaches to Jewish statehood in Palestine. The federation leadership in various communities was involved equally in these three streams of activities relating to pre-state Palestine. Other organizations emerged to deal with the difficulties of anti-Semitism and the rights of Jews in American society: the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and the Anti-Defamation League to name three. Yet, the largest share of funds being raised related to the American version of the Eastern Euro-

pean *Kehillah*, the local federation.

The formation of the United Jewish Appeal in 1938 followed the trauma of *Kristallnacht*. Clearly, the American Jewish community had to mobilize to help Jews in Europe and in Palestine. In many communities, federations became the vehicles for this help as they evolved into local United Jewish Appeals. In other communities it took far longer. In New York, for example, the UJA of New York raised money for overseas needs for six months of each year starting in the spring, and the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies raised money for local needs for the other six months beginning in the fall. In 1973 as the federation campaign for local needs held its opening dinner just after Yom Kippur, the Israeli-Arab realities instantly created the impetus for the final merger. It was the Yom Kippur War that was the ultimate catalyst for the leaders of the Federation and UJA to agree to a combined campaign. Yet, differences between the UJA and federation leadership, culture, and approach were so significant and deep that thirteen years passed before these two organizations agreed to finally merge and to create a unified UJA-Federation in 1986.

United Israel Appeal was established as a technical bridge between the American fundraising organizations and the Jewish Agency to provide careful compliance with all tax and governmental regulations insofar as U.S. tax-exempt funds were being used for charitable purposes in a foreign country. UIA's role broadened to become an advocate for the Jewish Agency within UJA and with the U.S. government.

The pressure to merge the national organizations grew in the 1990s. To be successful, however, the merger had to reconcile their disparate organizational cultures.

UJA was seen as a group of generals without an army. As strong advocates for overseas needs, its leadership would move quickly to meet a range of needs as they arose. Its effectiveness in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973 are the subject of legend. Its organization of a billion-dollar Operation Exodus campaign

to help support the *aliyah* of Soviet Jewry is an extraordinary achievement. Yet, revenues of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Joint Distribution Committee were declining at the same time as total American financial support for Israeli institutions was growing. No careful analysis of and action plan relating to the changing donor market were developed.

MORE AMERICAN THAN JEWISH

To understand the dynamics of the philanthropic change, one has to appreciate the changes that were taking place within the United States and within the lives of Jews in the United States. In a recent study, Stephen M. Cohen (1998, p. 6) concludes that these traditionally interwoven religious and ethnic aspects of Jewish identity have been split.

Several pieces of evidence point to the decline of the ethnic aspect of American Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness. Among these are the rise in intermarriage, a decline in in-group friendship, and the geographic dispersal of the Jewish population, both within metropolitan regions and across the United States. On all these levels Jews are maintaining fewer ties with one another. In other areas, Jewish membership organizations report aging and declining constituencies. Moreover, informed observers sense weakening enthusiasm for Israel....At the same time, indicators of specifically religious involvement seem to be holding their own, if not, in some cases increasing. Among these are memberships in synagogues, enrollment in Jewish day schools, adult study of classic Jewish text, as well as publication and reading of books in Jewish spirituality, theology, and religious practice, possibly even amounting to a flowering of American Jewish intellectual life, specifically in areas under the religious rubric (Cohen, 1998, p. 6, author's emphasis).

New religious rituals have emerged to reflect the realities of living in America. In his 1992 work, *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*, Jack Wertheimer includes an article, "Merry

Chanukah: The Changing Holiday Practices of American Jews, 1880–1950." It observes that Jewish cultural adaptation of religious rituals resulted in the emergence of new and redeveloped Hanukah celebrations as an alternative to the dominant Christmas-observing American culture. There was the need to create romance in Jewish holidays to offset the seductive nature of the majority culture.

Denominational switching is characteristic of Jewish life in the United States, reflecting the choice inherent in the American way of life.

Overall, 44% of American Jewish adults have switched from the denomination of their childhood to another as an adult. This frequency of change is somewhat more than 15 to 35% higher than that reported for white Protestants....The proportion who are Orthodox Jews has declined considerably, with 22% reporting being raised Orthodox and only 6% declaring it is a current choice. Although the popular media have claimed there is a return to Orthodoxy among American Jews, the data do not support such a claim....The proportion who prefer Conservative Judaism appears relatively stable (around 40%). However, the appearance of stability belies changes in the composition of the Conservative population. It results from the fact that the Conservative denomination has gained enough adherents from among those reared as Orthodox to offset its losses to the Reform denomination (some 28% of current Conservative Jews were raised Orthodox; the same percent switched from Conservative to Reform). The major beneficiary of Jewish interdenominational movement has been the Reform denomination. While just 26% of survey respondents report being raised Reform, 39% claim this denominational preference as adults in 1990 (*American Jewish Yearbook*, 1997, p. 125).

Jews as individuals in American society reflect American culture in every way, including their organizational affiliations and the demands that they make of those organizations. As the majority of American Jews

reach the third, fourth, and fifth generation of American life, Jews appear more American than Jewish.

FORCES FOR CONSOLIDATION

At the same time as Jews were becoming increasingly integrated into American society, the dysfunctionality of the national organizations was becoming more apparent. J.J. Goldberg, in his classic work, *Jewish Power: Inside the American Jewish Establishment* (1996, p. 353), describes the gap between the image and reality of the UJA.

For a half century, the United Jewish Appeal has been a central engine driving all the other parts of the machine called the organized American Jewish community....The reality of the UJA does not match the image, however. Most of the money credited to the UJA Federation campaign is actually raised by local federations that are only loosely affiliated to the United Jewish Appeal. From its New York headquarters, the UJA offers to federation its guidance and encouragement, and it helps to craft a unified image for each year's campaign; individual federations may follow the UJA's campaign theme or not, as they choose. The UJA also lobbies the individual federations to send in as large a share of their revenue as they can spare for the use of the two overseas relief agencies, the Joint and Jewish Agency, which technically own the UJA....Despite its outsized image as a massive organization with tentacles spread to every corner of the Jewish world, the fact is that the UJA itself is primarily a speakers bureau and cheering section for a diffuse, decentralized Jewish welfare process.

Goldberg goes on to describe the effort of the Council of Jewish Federations to create continental responsibility at the time of a large migration of Jews from the former Soviet Union to the United States. He notes that for the first time, a national Jewish organization won the power to tax local Jewish communities and make centralized decisions in their name. Yet, did CJF in fact achieve the sense of parliament and "taxpayers assem-

bly" that was heralded at the time? By the third year of collective responsibility for resettlement, the compliance rate with this voluntary reallocation of resources for resettlement was only 45 percent. An earlier effort to create an Institute for Jewish Life by CJF also failed to produce the necessary resources.

The push for consolidation stemmed largely from the major communities, which felt a strong sense of frustration with an unaligned group of national entities that used substantial resources with little added value. Local federations, led by New York and Chicago, demanded more from their national organizations and turned that demand into concrete political action, driving for serious organizational change.

It took five years from the call for a serious organizational self-study to the actual consolidation, which is likely the most complicated merger in the history of American non-profit organizations. As expected, there was serious resistance to it. To achieve the organizational restructure required these changes: the two overseas beneficiaries gave up their rights of ownership of the United Jewish Appeal; the boards of the United Jewish Appeal, United Israel Appeal, and Council of Jewish Federations voted themselves out of business; and the boards of two-thirds of the 188 federations accepted the creation of the new organization with the privileges and responsibilities of ownership, including complicated and carefully developed governance structures. In many ways, the consolidation process reflected the democratic nature of American organization life as thousands of copies of the 273-page "Merger Book" were distributed from Toronto to Hawaii and from Florida to Alaska. In a 60-day period starting in February 1999, the boards of these many organizations took formal action, with the legal structure approved and an interim governance and management system put in place that April. Final ratification of all interim actions and the first formal meetings of the boards of the new entity, United Jewish Communities, took place at the General Assembly in Atlanta in November 1999.

CHALLENGES OF 21ST-CENTURY AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE

As Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg has pointed out, American Jewish organizational life was built upon a mobilization concept for Jewish defense—locally and overseas. As the mobilization mandate and needs diminish, and the defense posture is less resonant, we must return to the question, What are our values as an American Jewish community, as part of a global Jewish people, and as an important component of a voluntary system of civil society? The ability to mobilize to meet an external threat diminished even in the six-year period from 1967 to 1973; fundraising efforts in the wake of the Yom Kippur War were much less successful than they were in 1967. Critical trends in the larger American society and within the Jewish community require an organizational response not based on external threats but on sustaining Jewish values.

Here are ten challenges of 21st century Jewish life.

Structural Change in Society/Economy

The information era has replaced the industrial era, resulting in massive global changes ranging from the fall of Communism to the world-wide hunger for market economies and democratic ways of life. Within the United States, these changes are seen in both the economy and in government. There are huge consolidations in business, including the creation of synergies across traditional business lines, as was recently seen in the United States' largest merger to date, that of Time Warner and AOL. In the last ten years there has been a rethinking of government's role, taxation policy, and its competitiveness with market sector services.

The third sector, nonprofit civil society, has yet to respond to these enormous changes, although that response is inevitable.

The Shift in Needs

Previously resonant appeals of remembering the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, and build-

ing an Israel at risk are no longer relevant to the contemporary scene. While there has been enormous success in building first-rate local Jewish institutions to meet the health and social service care needs of the population, the overall affluence of the American Jewish community results in this achievement having less of the mobilizing effect than it might have had in the past. While Jewish communal professionals and involved Jewish lay leaders decry the dangers of assimilation, that alone does not have a great fundraising appeal to the American Jewish community, most of whose members are very content living in the two worlds of assimilated Judaism and free America.

Change in Donors

Today's donors, both in the Jewish and general population, are far more interested in pursuing their charitable gifts to the "end product" and are more questioning of the need of umbrella organizations to distribute their acts of charity. Higher educational levels, greater confidence, and a long-standing American belief in individual and local initiative have resulted in demands for increased donor decision making and less confidence in any "federated" system.

Transition in Lay leadership

The American Jewish community has been blessed with strong lay leadership, historically drawn from the top entrepreneurial ranks of the community. As a group, these individuals came to the Jewish communal table with great generosity in the context of substantial wealth, resources beyond cash because of the size of the companies they owned, and the reach of those companies in other parts of the community. They possessed the knowledge of how to grow an enterprise and the ability to work with professional management, but they had little time to devote to volunteer work. Consequently, they wished their charitable life to reflect their corporate life, which was focused on key decisions, not on endless process.

In contrast, today's lay leaders are largely mid-career fee-for-service professionals and non-working women for whom a professional career was not a choice earlier in their lives. They have a lower level of wealth and giving and less experience in growing an organization or working with professional management. Because time is less of an issue, the corporate culture is dominated by "process."

Professional Challenge

Professionals, especially those in leadership positions, have had to accommodate to this change in organizational culture. More time is spent in making sure every one is "in the loop." The bold professional vision and rapid professional action that characterized United Jewish Appeal during its most successful era are things of the past. Professionals have become the gatekeepers for this new leadership and are often shackled by the processes demanded in their engagement; too, they frequently lack the skillset necessary to lead serious organizational change.

"Reshtetlization"

With the chaos created by massive changes in the needs, the donor marketplace, and the leadership scene, the natural desire for homeostasis and control leads many communities to look inward. Consequently, we observe what I define as a *reshtetlization*: a voluntary drawing of borders around a community that defies the very essence of the precept, *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh*—all Jews are responsible one for another. To the degree that looking inward dominates a community's policies is the degree to which we lose our sense of peoplehood, of shared obligation. Although initiatives such as Project Renewal and Partnership 2000 link communities, they violate some of the very core principles described by Elazar (1995). At a time when Jewish philanthropic power would enable the creation of a system to reach any Jew in need in any community in the world, we are increasingly focused on the local scene. The will for collective responsi-

bility, as demonstrated by the reduction in overseas support, is weak.

In response, the merged entity is actually placing the overseas beneficiaries and representatives of federations in the same room to engage in needs assessment and to determine core and elective needs with the expectation that a collective will can emerge from this process. However, it is too early to determine whether that collective will can be revived.

Diversity

The leadership of the organized institutions of Jewish life does not look like the Jews they are selected to lead. The gross underrepresentation of women and young people in both lay and professional leadership circles comes at a time when diversity in the workplace is an American norm. And, it does not go unnoticed by the *amcha*. Among the largest forty-four federations, there is only one woman chief executive officer, an abhorrent condition that sends a powerful message to the laity and professionals alike. Where else in American society is there but a single woman in the top 80 percent of revenue-producing activities? The failure to diversify leadership is part of the disaffection that has emerged.

Inclusiveness

In the past, there was a separation between "synagogue" and "state," as the philanthropic vehicles serving American Jewish life were not integrated with synagogue or synagogal organizations. This was an artificial separation that did not align with the very organic nature of Judaism: "Without Torah there is no bread. Without bread there is no Torah."

Creating a Jewish renaissance and assuring Judaism in the context of an era of unprecedented choice require that synagogues and representatives of the philanthropic Jewish world work together as full partners. Each of the four American Jewish denominations was given only one seat in the UJC trustee governing system of more than 500 delegates. This shortsighted structure is now being rectified,

as one-third of those governing the Jewish Renaissance and Renewal Pillar of UJC are coming from the synagogue movements.

Quality

One of the true paradigms for American life today is that of quality. The market system of capitalism has enabled all but the poorest American to demand and receive quality as they define it in all aspects of their lives. Yet, the Jewish community is less connected to market-driven quality. In part because of the communal (and often, monopolistic) nature of community and in part because of its history of crisis mobilization, American Jewish organizations are only now beginning to think about performance improvement as a component of their operations. In health care and higher education, standards and accreditation processes are built in and have been for decades. Only today are the Hillel and Jewish Community Center movements starting down the road of quality assurance and potential accreditation as they recognize the power of the marketplace and the need for them to provide quality service if they are to succeed in an era of choice. The Federation movement is not even focused on this issue, and its rhetoric is unconnected to its reality.

Welcoming Community

More than a third of American Jews give up their synagogue membership shortly after their son or daughter becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah. People join Jewish Community Centers when their child needs a preschool and disappear until an elderly parent needs a senior center or a teen wants an after-school program. American Jewish life is filled with a consumerism that the Jewish community has not yet fully understood nor to which it has yet responded. Whether in supplementary congregation-based Hebrew schools or in adult Jewish education, the competition with more "normative" aspects of American life calls for a welcoming philosophy that is the very essence of community. Whether American Jewish institutions can embody the sense of community remains to be seen.

Further, we are witnessing a national search for meaning and spirituality, unparalleled in recent history. Yet, while the work of our community is filled with such meaning and can easily imbue spirituality, we have neither the tactics nor the language to make these connections effectively for all but those few who devote most of their life energy to the field.

A CALL FOR TRANSFORMATION

Responding to these ten trends is the challenge faced by the nascent transformation. Yet, as is typical at times of chaos, command and control instincts emerge. Leadership tends to focus on doing the old better, rather than reassessing all past assumptions and leading a change that attempts to surf the waves of the new environment. "Major change minimizes our ability to dominate events. For a species whose entire existence is predicated on its ability to control its environment, the ultimate nightmare is an inability to assimilate change in a world transforming itself faster by the minute (Connor, 1992, p. 26).

In a classic chapter, "Sacred Cows Make the Best Burgers," in their book, *If It Ain't Broke, Break It*, Kriegel and Patler (1991, p. 115) write of the risks of avoiding the new and fresh approach to a healthy corporate culture.

Many controls and systems quickly turn into sacred cows because we do not take the time or expend the energy to keep them new and fresh. As a result, they become invisible, part of the environment, fading into the woodwork of our unconscious. Sacred cows are well camouflaged because many of us are distracted by the pursuit of the bigger game... the result of 'going along with the program' and not rounding up our sacred cows is that we unwittingly contribute to their perpetuation, even when they have far outlived their usefulness, and when you let them roam, they keep growing and gnawing on your patience as well as on profits and productivity. Sacred cows come in all shapes and sizes. Among the most common varieties are:

- Corporate Cows—Obsolete corporate culture
- Company Cows—Archaic, complex company policies
- Departmental Cows—Divisive turf wars
- Industry Cows—Unquestioned industry-wide standard operating procedures
- Personal Cows—Unproductive routines, ruts, and habits

Both in its development phase and in UJC's early months of operations, the pressure between those who wanted to maintain homeostasis, even with the environmental changes, and those who wanted to change and lead in this environment, was the most interesting dynamic. The UJC has succeeded in attracting serious entrepreneurial leaders who are, in fact, far more representative of the Jewish community in terms of gender, age, and geography than was the case in the predecessor organizations. The combination of the new faces, many of whom will make organizational mistakes as they strive for change, and the veteran leadership can help UJC transform itself.

In his memoir, *Roots of the Future*, Rabbi Herbert Friedman (1999, p. 368), a former chief executive officer of UJA, states, "Long-range goals will contribute to the maturity of the American Jewish community and switch its thinking away from the question, What is this year's crisis? What are we giving our money for? There may very well be a this year's war or immigration or housing crisis, and those must be handled. But taking the long view guarantees sustained, visionary attention and I find that a strong and healthy attitude."

Therein lies the greatest opportunity for today's United Jewish Communities and many of the other organizations of American Jewish life. A national Jewish agenda, which is clear, with transparency in all aspects of operations, and builds on collaboration with others, has the potential to turn UJC into a community of communities. It will then have the inherent strength to recognize that each individual community will seek its own self-expression within the rich heritage of Jewish

communal life. With greater inclusivity, all those working in behalf of the common mission will be welcomed and treasured as colleagues.

UJC can then build its mandate boldly through pursuit of a sacred vision emerging from these core Jewish values:

- *Tzedakah*—The belief that giving is not a matter of charity or choice but a requirement of justice.
- *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh*—All Jews are responsible one for another. UJC must not rest until every Jew in the world requiring relief can be reached. Each day hundreds of thousands of Jewish elders, whether in Baku or Brooklyn, Beersheva or Brazil, are helped through these collective efforts.
- *Pidyon Shevuim*—Redeeming the captive. In the last decade alone, more than one million Jews were rescued and resettled from countries in which they were in physical or spiritual peril—the states of the Former Soviet Union, Syria, Iran, Yemen, Ethiopia. UJC, in partnership with Israel, must guarantee that every Jew can live free from concern that their Judaism places them at risk.
- *Tikun Olam*—Healing the world. The federation health and social service institutions represent the best of a compassionate community, uplifting the lives of millions of Jews and non-Jews in North America and, with overseas partners, around the world.
- *Ahavat Yisrael*—UJC must be dedicated to the principle that while we as Jews, differ on much, we agree on more. We are united by a common memory and bound to a common destiny.
- *L'Dor V'Dor*—From generation to generation. UJC must enrich lives as it guarantees the education of our young throughout the world to the wonders of our faith and our people.

UJC can take the leadership in creating compelling Jewish life, which becomes a magnet encouraging Jews to choose that life.

To accomplish this requires a commitment to the creation of a mandate and a set of expectations for UJC that are themselves compelling. For example, UJC must be seen as having the highest level of integrity. It must seek greater perfection in all its endeavors. It must recognize its responsibility and accountability to member federations but be prepared to take the risks of leadership and confront issues and opportunities that propel achievements and aspirations. It should highlight and share federation best practices on the basis of quality alone. It must eschew bureaucracy at every level.

UJC's agenda must be clear and measurable and reflect the mission and values of this new entity. It should include the following objectives:

- supporting *Aliyah* from countries in which Jews are at risk
- rebuilding Jewish communities in the states of the Former Soviet Union
- assisting American communities in building Jewish schools at the elementary, middle and high-school levels while assuring that adequate trained personnel are available
- assuring high-quality health and social services in partnership with the American government through a sophisticated value-added approach to local federation agencies
- providing a meaningful living and learning experience in Israel as a gift to every Jewish youngster via an emerging partnership between a group of philanthropists and the Israeli government; UJC should lead this partnership
- doing a regular needs audit of Jews at risk throughout the world so that the systems are in place to recognize the need for support and be able to respond quickly when necessary

Finally, and most importantly in this era of philanthropic choice, the richest opportunity lies in UJC becoming the switching station between donors who seek to do good and support the UJC vision and those projects

certified to be of need, merit, and quality. Donors can then fulfill their philanthropic dreams within the context of community. The Trust for Jewish Philanthropy, currently under development as a semi-autonomous arm of UJC, has the capacity to achieve this goal, but only if it avoids being mired in the high organizational maintenance demands of today's national Jewish institutions.

UJC needs to help its member federations reinvent themselves as centers for Jewish philanthropy; that is, organizations that link their sacred mission and its manifestations with individual donors. Financial support should be seen in the context of a hierarchy in which the unrestricted gift is the highest form of giving to a federation. However, it should no longer be seen as the primary form of giving. Language such as "primacy of the Annual Campaign" distances federations from intelligent donors who seek to make a difference in Jewish life but believe they should experience some of the responsibilities of decision-making. With the increased resources of unrestricted endowments, and the ongoing momentum of Annual Campaigns, some of the least visible but most important programs can and should be protected by strategic planning and allocation processes.

Some federations have developed creative solutions that capitalize on donors' desire for decision-making involvement. Washington, for example, has developed for young donors a venture philanthropy fund, wherein each "partner" contributes toward a general fund designed to support new approaches to Jewish challenges characterized by the willingness to take additional risks in program and service development. For a number of years, New York has had professional staff working with "friendly" donors and foundations to connect them directly to projects whose need is certified by the federation. More recently, it has challenged donors and foundations to match gifts for specific projects. Throughout North America, many federations have begun to work with local foundations with Jewish interests, better educating them about needs in the community.

CONCLUSION

In commenting on some American companies, corporate reinvention expert Michael Hammer (1994) states, "When memories exceed dreams the end is near." The importance of American Jewish organizational memories is profound. Yet, the dreams of a caring, cohesive, dynamic community as a byproduct of choice in the context of freedom are no less profound.

To achieve the potential of the organizational change that has come about in the past year within an incredibly complex environment, UJC must clarify its focus, obtain alignment of its key stakeholders, and move forward with the intensity of a compelling cause. It is that cause that has been at the heart of the success of the American Jewish community. It will be that same compelling cause that will assure our children and our children's children the deep and vital successes that we have been blessed to witness in our own lifetimes.

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