

New Dimensions in Federation—Agency Relationships: The Special Role of Social Planners*

WILLIAM KAHN

Executive Vice President, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York

WITH the end of World War II, organized world Jewry was confronted with five challenges:

1. To save the remnant left after the Holocaust.
2. To build a Jewish State.
3. To provide institutions to meet Jewish needs.
4. To translate the Jewish passion for social justice into a force for social change.
5. To transmit the Jewish heritage.

In the past forty years, we have made enormous progress in meeting the five challenges. We did help save the remnant of Jewry following the Holocaust. Federations played a significant role in the creation of the State of Israel. Agencies have been developed in each of our communities to meet a variety of Jewish needs. As individuals and as an organized Jewish community, we made a contribution to social justice in the civil rights struggle in the early 60's. In the transmission and enrichment of our Jewish heritage we have made a number of good beginnings, but we are not home yet by a long shot.

Federation professionals have practiced during a particularly stressful period in the United States. We have seen a variety of upheavals of an economic nature. We have experienced several wars that divided our country, specifically the Korean and Vietnam Wars. With the emergence of the State of Israel, we have moved from crisis to crisis

as this mini-State has established itself as a beacon of democracy in the Middle East.

The civil rights struggle threatened to tear American society apart. We have witnessed a revolution in the role of the woman. We have seen the family go through extraordinary changes.

During the past three years, we have seen a counter-revolution in America in terms of the changing role of government in meeting the basic human needs of the American population. Much of the social progress we experienced during the past fifty years has been challenged and we foresee a continuing erosion of government's role in human services.

The Reagan administration was elected and reelected with the promise to take government off the taxpayers' backs and, in large part, out of taxpayers' lives. The fact that the electorate rose to such tempting bait says something to which we in Jewish philanthropy should listen. The gauntlet has been thrown at the feet of Jewish communal workers who must confront the threat to their voluntary social welfare and health services.

It is imperative that we view our Jewish Federations and our Jewish agencies against this backdrop. What goes on in the commons has an enormous impact on what Federations are all about. What is going on in our country presents frightening prospects for our agencies. The challenges which we face on the domestic scene, and the actions which must be taken to confront these

challenges call for courage and effective leadership.

Quite apart from ethical and moral considerations, enlightened self-interest demands that Federations involve ourselves in the general community. The most obvious symptom of the spiritual disease of our civilization is the feeling among people that they have lost control of their destinies. I feel they can regain control, and in that cause Jewish communal professionals can help as aggressive advocates of positive action and by using their skills to engage the lay leadership.

An important challenge professionals face, therefore, is the education of lay leadership. People do change positions with education. Professionals need all the lay support they can get to bring to elected representatives the impact of the reduction in human services. They will also need to help those affected raise their voices in protest. They must form coalitions to encourage the expression of concerns by elderly and other constituents.

Federation social planners (I prefer the term "Human service planners") are right on the cutting-edge of the whole Jewish human service system. They guide and orchestrate the budget and planning processes in their communities. They interface with the agencies and with lay leadership in a variety of areas and have substantial power. Of the various issues that come to their attention, what they pick up and relate to lay leadership gives them very substantial power. While the laymen play the policy-making role, we are aware of the very key role that Federation professionals play in agenda development and policy determination.

I am mildly troubled as I look at who are the planners. A surprising number come directly to Federation either from graduate schools of social work or from schools of public administration. Many

lack a functional agency experience. I think there is a price we pay in such a case. The experiences of dealing with human pain and carrying out programs in functional settings create a superb underpinning for moving into an overall community planning role.

Compensatory steps can be taken by those who do not have functional agency backgrounds through their intensive visits to agencies, digging in to get a sense of the concerns which line-professionals have, the issues they deal with and what their problems are. They might even give five hours of their weekly time to taking on an assignment of directly delivering services in a Center or family agency. This is a very big challenge for a planning director. The FEREP Program may call for some reshaping in this direction, perhaps requiring a direct functional agency experience before moving into the planners role.

In the final analysis, we need to know for what and for whom Federations are planning. They are working to meet the needs of real Jewish people who make up our real Jewish community!

There is no question that ever-expanding central fund-raising capacities will in the very near future result in the North American effort raising over one billion dollars annually. Federations are also going to be continuing, I feel, to shift more resources to developing programs and activities enhancing Jewish identity. Federations are going to be more closely coordinating our work with synagogues and more and more will be using the synagogues as vehicles for delivery of communal services. Federations will have to increase support for Jewish education.

In addition to these thrusts, Federations must continue to provide resources to agencies to meet a variety of Jewish needs. It is a question whether Federations are showing a full regard

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and respect for what our Jewish functional agencies currently do and do well.

As Federations go about planning and budgeting, it is imperative that they recognize that all wisdom does not rest with themselves. In many ways, the functional agencies, their staff, laymen and clients are the true barometers of the community climate. The agencies provide direct services, reacting to family and individual needs. Agencies, with Federation help, have opportunities for examining and measuring and weighing the impact of their service. The key question for planners is how to harness some of this experience in dealing with the quality of life of our Jewish community.

I wonder if at times Federations come across too much as the boss, with the agencies as the underlings. This is a sense I, for one, coming from a functional agency, have experienced in seven years as a Federation executive. Some of the resentment towards Federation can be understood since Federation is the resource provider, and from the agency viewpoint never providing adequate resources.

The connection between Federation and the agencies, while traditionally fiscal, must more and more take on the aspects of a real partnership. William Avrunin made a very key point at the 1960 General Assembly of the CJF when he spoke about how the quality of communication is really based on the quality of relationship. He emphasized the importance of mutual understanding and mutual respect. We have to examine the kind of climate that is created when agencies come to Federations for budget hearings, when site visits are made by Federation people and, most importantly, how Federation planners orient lay committees which review an agency's operation. Planners can and do create a climate and chairmen must be sensitized to create an atmosphere of warmth.

Planners are in so many ways the face of Federation. Planners necessarily have an overview of the totality of the Jewish community and carry major responsibility to help make the overall system of services work.

It is vitally important that they convey to the Federation committees an understanding of what the agency is about. There is no greater "pick-up" for an agency than to have Federation committee people make observations on their own on the quality of that agency's work.

I have found that there is not enough use of our functional agencies in leadership development. It can be a key to their development that we provide laymen an opportunity to be in the physical setting where service is provided so that they can "feel the flesh" and get a "hands on" sense of what the human services actually are. If the site visit is limited only to a lecture by the agency executive, an opportunity will have been missed.

Trust is a substantial factor in agency-Federation relationships and a natural question that comes to mind is the kind of relationships in friendship that Federation and agency personnel have. There is no way either party will be compromised assuming there is clarity in professional and personal roles. Do Federation personnel help agency people understand that both are on the "same ball club" and that their interests are joint interests? Do Federation veterans socialize with the young professionals? I really feel that the professional and personal quality of interactions of Federation and agency executives and sub-executives are very important. This is true not only of relationships with agency staff, but with professionals of other organizations.

In communication between Federation and its network of agencies, the quality of agency executive and/or

executive and president meetings is very key. What is the degree of participation, the frequency of interaction, the nature of agenda determination? These go a long way in creating a sense of trust on the part of agencies toward Federation.

Planners have an enormous stake in seeing to it that the agencies are strengthened. Strong agencies invariably result in strengthening the very concept of Federation and community. It is important to remember that the agencies actually predated the Federation itself, and the agencies, recognizing the problems of fragmented fund-raising and a lack of a grand design, created the Federation movement.

In the mid-1980's, the demands of a tight economy will challenge the effectiveness of Jewish human service agencies. There will be increased concern with accountability, effective delivery of services and efficiency. As Federation allocations become a smaller portion of agency budgets, Federation must heighten its capacity to help agencies introduce cost-effective management.

Historically, the essential Federation role has been that of planning, allocation and fund-raising. Today, agencies often see Federation as principally an allocating body. Federation's role in management assistance was only recently developed. Quantifiable goals and objectives were rarely developed by Federation with its agencies so that there has been little monitoring and measurement. Only in budgeting have Federations done continuous monitoring.

Federation activities in the areas of accountability, measurement, evaluation and management assistance reveal that while Federations offer services in some of these areas, it is often on a piecemeal basis. But while the state of the art of measurement in Federation agencies is rather low, it is no worse than in most human service areas.

There seems to be a pressure point developing now around the need for agency evaluation and determining budget priorities of Federations. Agencies must be encouraged to do self-evaluations. I have confidence that a well-thought out process and an encouragement of the agency to examine in some depth the impact of its service can only have positive results.

In self-evaluation the agency laymen themselves are brought into a direct contact with the nature of their services. Obviously, there has to be a component of trust on the part of the agency toward Federation to do a thoughtful self-evaluation.

If there is a lack of trust, then the Federation professional staff has to examine its working relationships with agencies and to determine how they can be improved. This same principle would apply to a modified budget approach which will work only if there is trust. I feel that budgeting will continue to be done for agencies and not for services. Federations, all, should be aware that when they suggest priorities for agencies, they had better be prepared to put additional dollars into the pot.

Agencies will need considerable assistance with developing internal fund-raising capabilities which should in no way detract from the annual Federation Campaign. This includes not only endowments, but gifts from their board members and the opportunities for helping internal groups of the agency conduct a modest fund-raising which would not detract from central fund-raising.

In regard to campaigning, we all have had frustrations with agency personnel not fully engaging their laymen in the annual Federation campaign. There seems to be a naive assumption on the part of Federation executives that agency executives are knowledgeable in the conduct of the board members'

campaign for Federation. A very precious and important skill to teach agency executives is how they can be supportive of the annual Federation Campaign and what role they can play. There is sometimes a tendency to use the agency staff as the "whipping boys" when actually they may feel insecure and inept.

In what other ways can planners help the agencies?

There is a vast reservoir of laymen with special skills who can be most helpful to agencies. Enlightened self-interest would suggest that Federations should develop programs of *pro bono* management assistance for their agencies, using this resource of people, some of whom may or may not be interested some day in agency board service. They should assist agencies in securing endowments, lobby on their behalf for necessary legislation and help them obtain special grants from foundations.

Federations should also assist the agencies with their lay leadership—assisting with designing courses in leadership training and "feeding" lay people to the agencies. This will result in a stronger Jewish community through well-trained volunteers. Strong lay leadership only comes about through hard, thoughtful work.

Agency lay leadership should not be entirely different from Federation leadership. There should be overlap. It is through this overlapping leadership that there is back-and-forth formal and informal communication and enhancement of a sense of community.

It would appear that more and more of our thrust is going to be to encourage different functional agencies to work together in common service needs. Whether it be with respect to the aged, the family, the single parent, the teen, the problem of substance abuse, and so forth, we must more effectively pool our resources in attacking a problem in a meaningful way. Without focusing only

on the word teamwork—the very nature of how agencies are brought together with common concerns can be a substantial step in enhancing a sense of community. The major task of Federation is community building.

The question has frequently arisen as to the appropriateness of Federation itself executing demonstration projects. Frequently this implies a lack of trust in our agencies. It can even be an unconscious "put-down". Every effort should be made when a demonstration project is to be mounted to use the functional agency and not the Federation as the demonstrator.

As Charles Miller has expressed it, Federation has become the closest thing we have in this country to an organized Jewish community. Whatever structural shortcomings it has, its enabling interest over so many programs makes it the most important central organizational mechanism we have to ensure the survival of many aspects of Jewish life.

People need a warm environment today. Agencies are instruments for Jewish linkage. They are more than a vehicle for service. People need services they can trust. They need life goals, standards and guidelines that matter. It is conceivable that well-planned community services are a strong combative force in terms of the disorganization we are seeing and experiencing.

We are going to prevail in our Jewish Federation network, led by people who play key roles in enhancing and planning human services. Heschel said that "Survival, mere continuation of being, is a condition man has in common with animals. Characteristic of humanity is concern for what to do with survival. To be or not to be is not the question. The true problem is how to survive, what sort of future to strive for. Survival requires above all, a self worthy of survival".

Identity Issues in the Jewish Adopted Adolescent*

DEBORAH N. SILVERSTEIN

Director of Professional Services, Parenting Resources, Santa Ana, California

Adoption, per se, triggers seven lifelong issues for members of the [adoption] triad. These issues surface at different developmental stages, but all appear to be present in full force during the adoptee's adolescence. These issues, especially the ones involved in identity formation, are painfully increased by the presence of issues regarding Jewish identity and by Jewish laws and attitudes toward adoption.

Introduction

In the Jewish-American community, adoption is, and has been, a common and acceptable manner for childless couples to become parents. Of late, Jews have, of necessity, adopted primarily non-Jewish children. There has been little examination of these practices. The infertile couple's pain and the reaction this distress has caused in rabbinic and social service circles have led to ill-considered rescue behaviors and an avoidance of the long-term implications and wide-reaching ramifications of adoption. This short-sightedness has an impact on the adoption triad—the adoptee, the adoptive family, and the birthfamily—and raises issues for the Jewish community as a whole. Jewish communal workers and agencies, whether or not they provide adoption services directly, do treat adoptees and their families, and the birthparents who surrendered them.

Many of the issues inherent in the Jewish adoption experience converge when the child reaches adolescence. At this time 3 factors intersect: (1) an acute awareness of the significance of being adopted; (2) the profound meaning of being a Jew in history; and (3) a biopsychosocial striving toward the development of a whole identity. Jewish communal workers must address the

interactional effects of adoption; Jewish attitudes toward adoption; and adolescent development, and the threat these factors pose to the formation of an integrated identity.

Adoption is such a common experience that it is worthy of more than "orphan drug" investigation. Roughly one in fifty persons is directly affected by adoption.¹ Jews are over-represented in the large number of adoptors. One percent of all children under 18 years of age are adopted outside of their birthfamily. Thirteen percent of all emotionally disturbed out-patients are adoptees, and in some facilities, up to thirty percent of the inpatients are adoptees.²

These facts alone are unsettling. Additionally, they raise a number of issues for which there presently exist only partial answers or no answers at all. It is not the intent of this article to question adoption *per se*, but rather to challenge some adoption assumptions, specifically, the persistent notion that adoption is *not* different from other forms of parenting and the disregard of many people for the pain and struggles inherent in adoption. These latter difficulties become particularly pronounced in the adoptee's adolescence.

¹ Statistics from Triadoption Library, Westminster, California, 1983.

² Notes from a conference sponsored by Del Amo Hospital, Del Amo, California, December 8, 1983.

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